



CHILDHOOD GRAFFITI

(FURUSATO KODOMO GRAFFITI)



Ryuichi HARAGA



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原賀隆一

HARAGA Ryuichi

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All explanations written around illustrations have been translated using the imperative form, to make them easier to understand. Keep in mind that they only describe the way I did it when I was a child, that there are other ways around, and therefore that they are to be taken only as references to help you arrive at your objectives.

INTRODUCTION



Surrounded by plentiful natural beauty, my hometown is Mikawa town, Tamana district in Kumamoto Prefecture on the southern island of Kyushu, Japan. The hills were full of all kinds of trees and grasses, the birds were almost too noisy and there were hills with various trees like jungles. The rivers were clear - right to the bottom - and river fish of all sizes were swimming there.

In that beautiful countryside I grew up free until I graduated from high school. And while enjoying the ever changing natural beauty, we played all sorts of games. **When I say "played"**, I'm talking about a range from straight-forward games of making utensils and tools, to helping with work in the fields, participating in local customs, fishing for river-fish, picking fruit etc; combining practical daily life with playing.

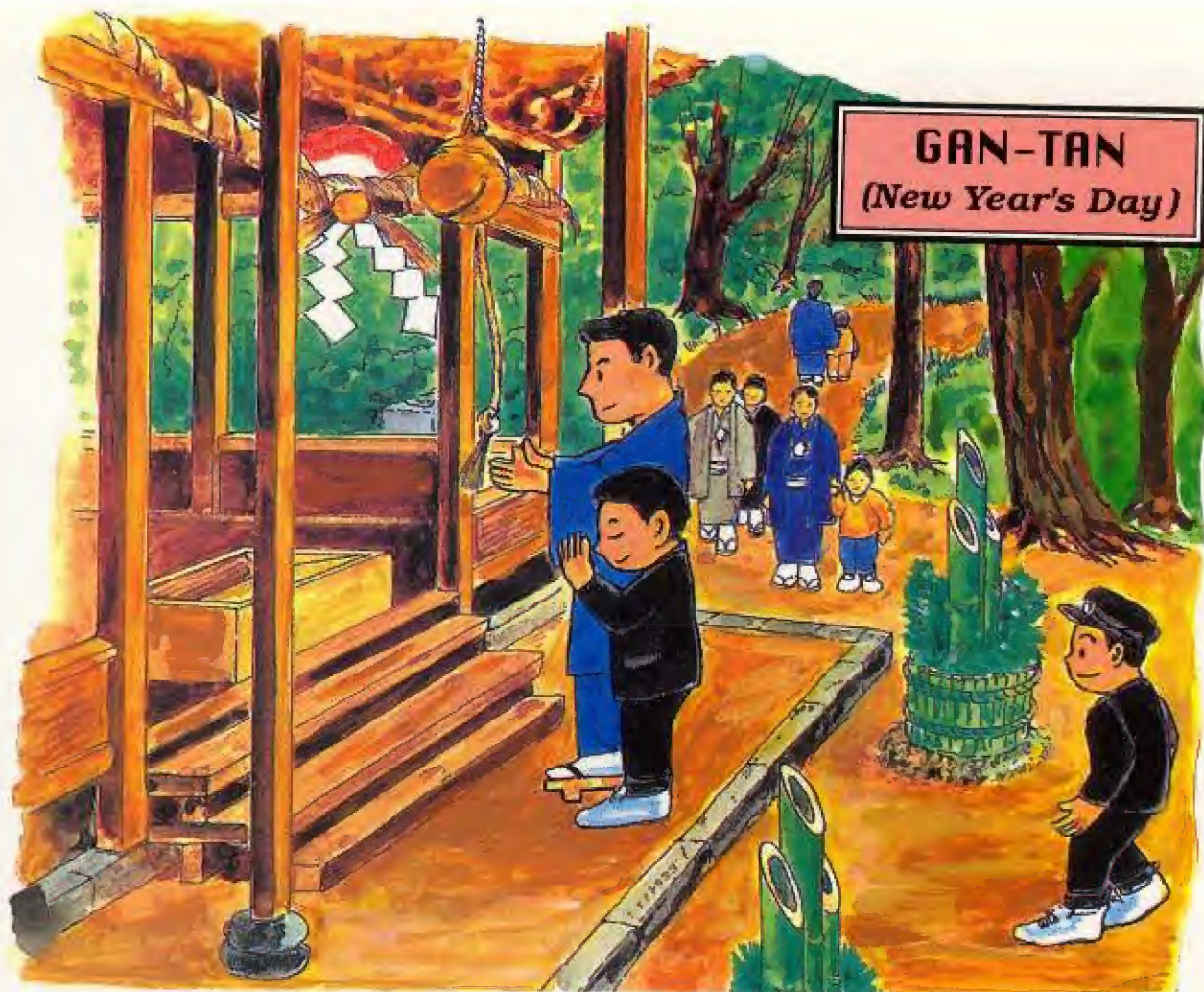
Anyway, when we were children, we played so much. **I've explained here what I "played"**, but it is still only a small part of my memories. As I did hardly any research, you could say these are recollections of my memories. Because of this, my memories of game rules, construction methods and so on may not always be correct. And so I would like people to correct these, based on their experiences. However, please remember there are different ways of playing in different areas.

As well as this, among my drawings there are things which at first appear to be **"dangerous games"** and in reality playing in those times included many games which by one mistake could be very dangerous. **However I cannot remember anybody who was hurt through this type of "playing"**.

In this present peak of materialistic civilization, I may be nostalgic, but isn't there some way to let the present day children experience the way we played until we were muddy and black all over, in those days when time went by slowly?

I feel a heartfelt love for the "home town" which gave me these experiences and I even feel proud of it. Also to both my parents, of course to the older children who showed me how to play, and to my friends, **my heartfelt thanks**.

Ryuichi Haraga



Early on the morning on New Year's Day, mother woke me up saying "Hurry up, and go to the shrine to worship with your father. By the time you get back I'll have the rice-cake soup ready". I was too sleepy to get up since I had talked through New Year's Eve until daylight with my friends. "New Year's Day is the key to the rest of the year". Remembering the saying, I halfheartedly got up and went to the village shrine with my father. "New Year's morning; the earlier, the more blessings". So many villagers were there already. Starting with the small shrines with the god for domestic animals, god for the kitchen etc, we prayed at the main shrine last of all for general worship. "May this year also be a good year. May my grades at school go up..."

On returning from the shrine, rice-cake soup and the special New Year's food were all on the table. And only then, with all the family present we bowed and made our New Year's greetings.

"Congratulations on the opening of the New Year, let's try for a united family this year also". Everyone was happy with the most delicious treat of a year and even the children received a cup of New Year's sake (rice-wine).

Later, a group of friends from the same neighborhood set off to climb Nijo-yama(a 319m above sea level hill) where every New Year's Day, there were many stalls all lined up. When we reached the hilltop, puffing away, just as we thought there they were. New Year's pocket money (at that time ¥50 to ¥100) was counted as we searched for bargains. Grilled squid, spinning tops, kites, swords, pistols and so on; everything we wished for made it a hard choice. **The most joyful day of the year.**



TAKO-A-GE (Kite Flying)



"My kite is higher." "No. Mine is."

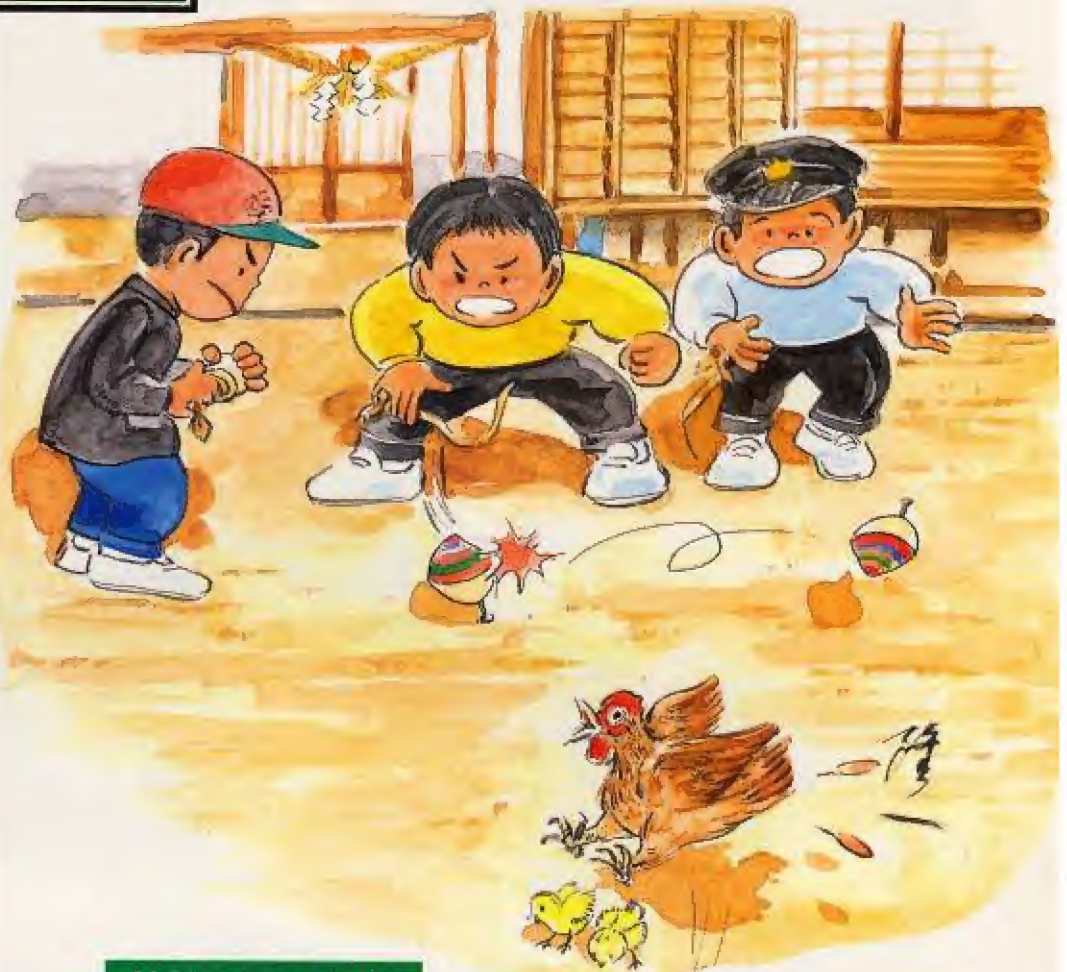
Shouting with each other, we flew kites. Some big boys flew hand-made kites. Some kites went so high that they seemed to touch the sky, and almost disappear. We elementary school kids bought ready-made kites* and attached strips of newspaper as tails. We hurried to a nearby riverbank or harvested rice paddies to try out our new kites. On days with good wind it blew the kites so strongly that running strings hurt my fingers. Pulling the kite string, the wind lifted the kite; then we would let the string out little by little. We had to be quite careful, or it easily crashed into the ground. Small tears could be repaired but crash landings meant crying to mother for an allowance to buy a new kite.

* At that time a kite cost about 20 yen.



KO-MA-MAWA-SHI (Top Spinning)

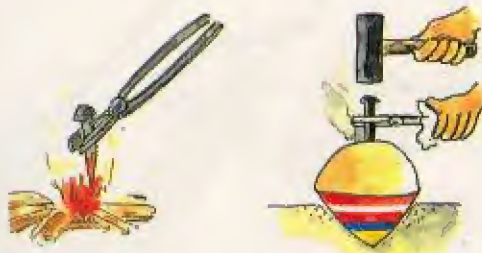
When spinning tops with "ready, set, go", we all started spinning at the same time to see who could spin the longest. Or we used "scissors, paper, stone" to decide the order, and aiming to knock out the other top while it was still spinning, we used such tricks as spinning knockout and hammer top. Hammer top was often fierce enough to split a top or scrub away the color of the top.



HOW TO SPIN.



The spinning rope is made of a kind of hemp. It is hammered well and woven to your taste of thickness.



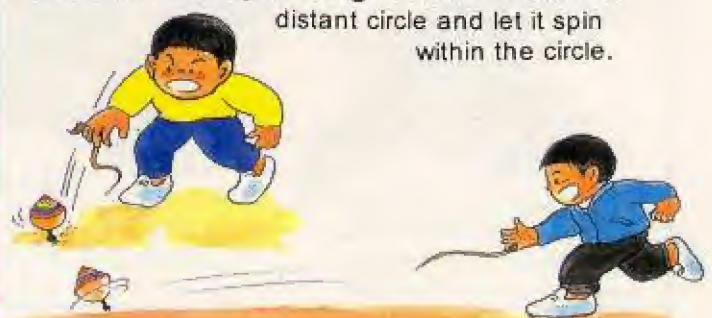
Fix the top in the ground and nail the heated axle into it. Be careful not to break the top. The axle can be sharpened with a file.

Start winding the thinner part of the rope. Wind securely from the shaft (axle) to the wooden part. To wind over and over with a thin rope is not good. Grasp the top with the rope knot gripped between the third finger and the little finger.



Beat spinning is to strike the top strongly to the ground.

Side-throw spinning is to aim to reach a distant circle and let it spin within the circle.

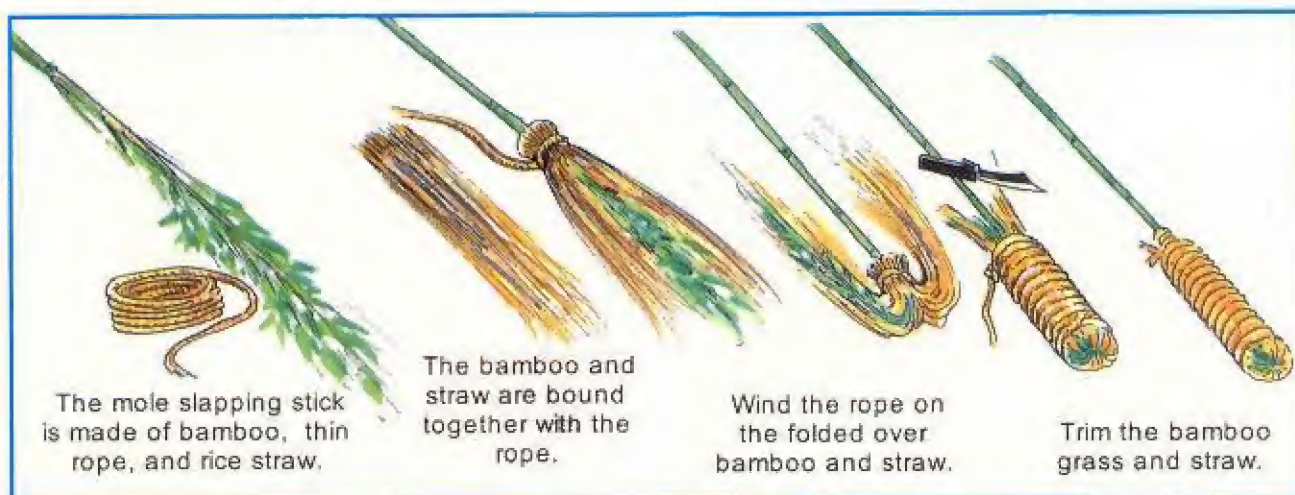


MO-GU-RA-U-CHI (Mole Slapping)

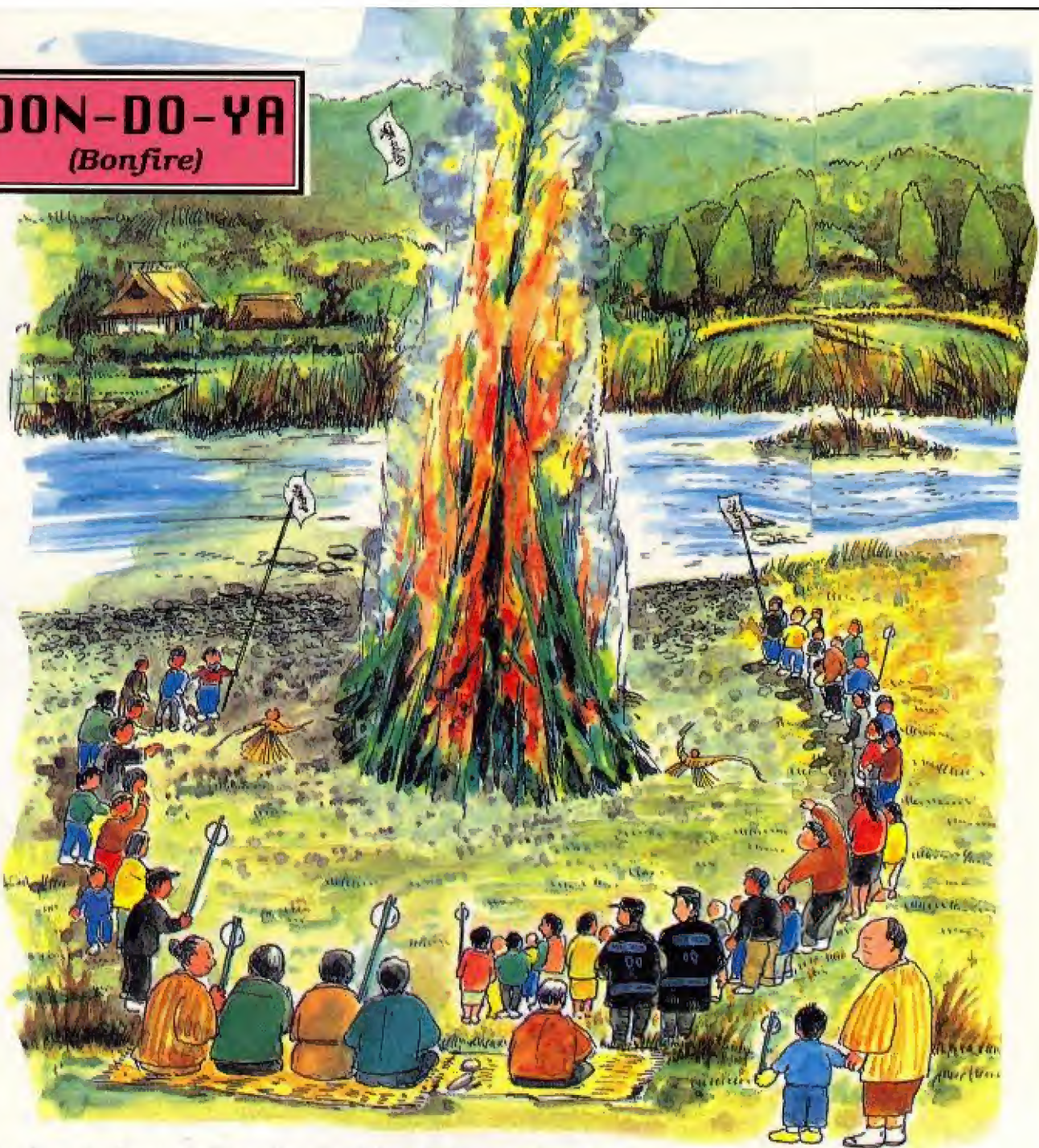
"Mole slapping is on 13th.
Mole slapping is on 13th.
Don-doya (big bonfire) is on 14th."



Chanting loudly, we children drove moles from the yards of the houses. Moles were harmful animals since they ate potatoes and other roots or made holes in pathways of paddy fields. Somehow it became a custom to hit the ground with specially made 'mole slapping sticks', and the home-owner yelled, "No, not yet. The moles are still there." We hit hard until we were covered in sweat. "Well, that's enough." Then he gave us rice-cakes as reward. We collected many rice-cakes and baked them on Don-doya, the next day. I'm not sure whether this custom made the moles disappear or not, though.



DON-DO-YA (Bonfire)



Dondoya is always held on January 14. Children and youth groups started stacking things a few days before. Districts competed for the highest bonfire, but this resulted in an accident once, and then people kept them moderate. Even so it crackled and burned vigorously, as if scorching the heavens. You couldn't even get close as it burned your cheeks. We threw our first calligraphy paper of the New Year stuck to bamboo stick high into the fire because **we believed much progress in calligraphy could be made**. It was also said that the smoke and heat would **keep us healthy and safe throughout** the year. All the new year ornaments were brought from homes and burned. After the big fire burned down, the remaining fire baked long-awaited rice-cakes.



Adults drink sake (rice wine) in bamboo stalks.



Mochi (rice cake) is attached to the split bamboo and baked in the remaining fire.



It is eaten with soy-sugar sauce or with natto (fermented soy-beans).

KANA-KUGI-U-CHI (Throw A Nail Into Ground)



5 INCH(13 cm)NAIL--
This nail could be
picked up at a building
site or a shed.

HOW TO THROW



NAIL THROW DOWN

First, the players (two
children) must determine who
is the attacker and who is the
defender.

The defender throws a nail
into the ground. The attacker
throws a nail to hit and knock
down the defender's nail. If
the attacker's nail stands up
in the ground and the
defender's nail is knocked
down, the attacker wins the
rival's nail. And then
positions change.



Even if the attacker fails to throw a nail into the
ground, the defender must change positions and
continue to play. If each fails to win, the positions
change and the game continues.



When nothing
happens, continue
the game by
changing positions.

When the attacker throws a
nail to the ground which
simultaneously hits the
opponent's nail which is lying
down, attacker wins it.

SECCHIN-ZUME (Locking In Lavatory)

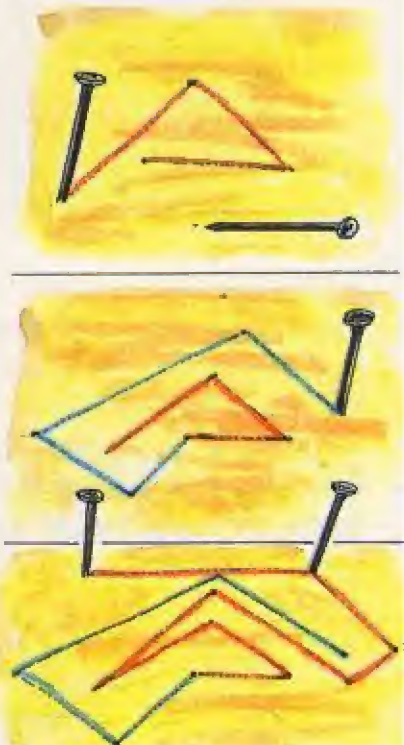
SETCHIN means a lavatory and ZUME means to
lock in, and both words together mean locking the
opponent's way of escape. I hear that, in SAMURAI
age, a person in a lavatory was the most defenseless
and could not escape from an attack.

To play the game first draw
approximately a 15 cm line.

The order to
play is
determined by
doing scissors-
paper-stone.
The first player
throws down a
nail into the
ground and
draws a direct
line from the
position he
threw down at
the edge of
the drawn line.



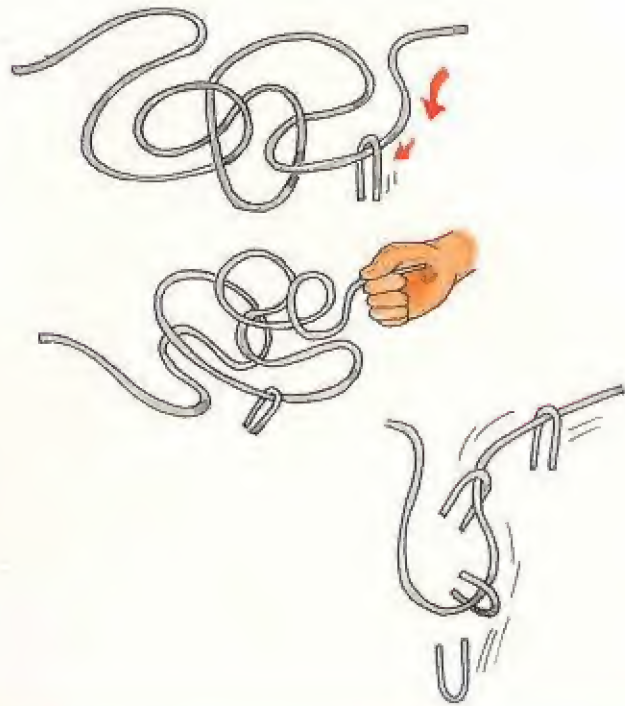
He continues
to throw down
the nail so
that lines
make circles
around the
first line. If he
fails to make
the nail stand
up in the
ground,...



...the players change. The next player begins
from the opposite edge of the 15 cm line and
tries to get out from the circle. A line can
never cross an other line. Finally the player
who declares himself unable to escape from
the opponent's circle is defeated.

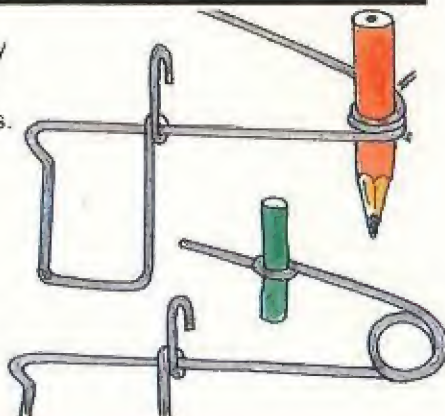
HARI-GANE-WATA-RI (Bent Wire Tight Rope)

FIRST, bend a long wire at random and place a short "U" shaped wire on it. This game is to move the "U" shaped wire from one end of the long wire to the other end without dropping it. You must be careful to slide the "U" shaped wire on the long wire, keeping it upside down. You need considerable concentration.



HARI-GANE-PI-SU-TO-RU (Wire Pistol)

You can let fly a small stone by using wires.

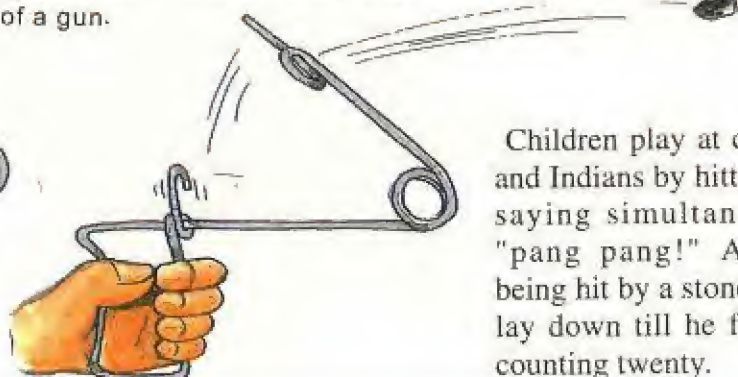
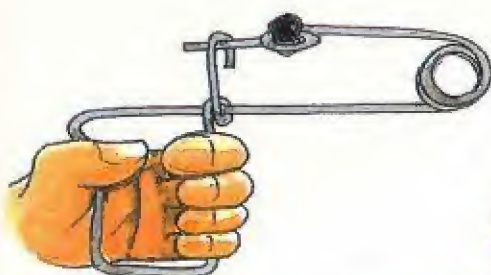


Hardening the spring is needed. Hardening means cooling suddenly by water after heating.

Place a small stone as in the picture.

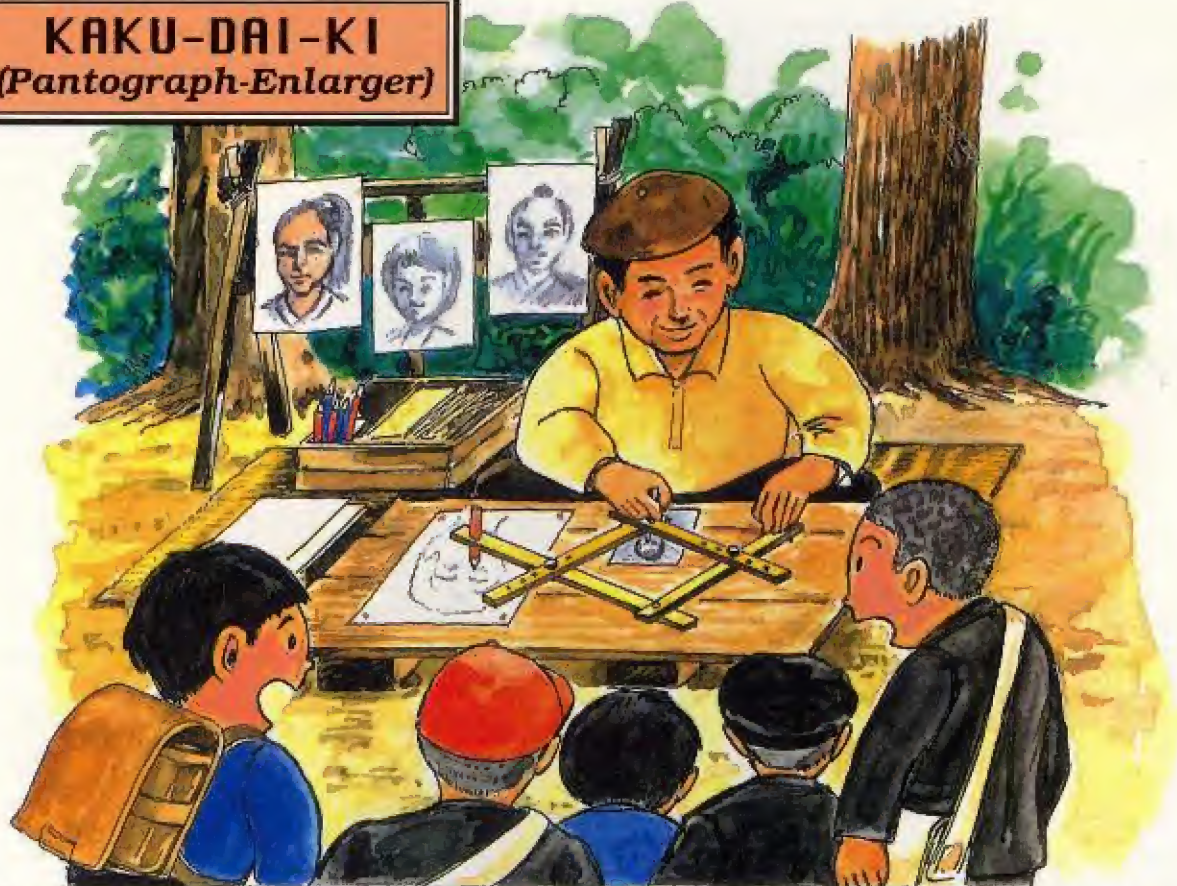
Squeezing acts as the trigger of a gun.

The effective range was 5-6 meters.



Children play at cowboy and Indians by hitting and saying simultaneously "pang pang!" Anyone being hit by a stone has to lay down till he finished counting twenty.

KAKU-DAI-KI (Pantograph-Enlarger)



One day coming out from school, I noticed a group of people under the ginkgo tree by the school gate. When I also went closer to see what was happening, I saw a man looking like an artist using some kind of tool to draw a picture. Behind him he had hung several pictures and they were so well done as you would think they were photographs. They were of movie stars and singers of those times. Surprised I looked at his hands drawing the picture and saw that from a small original photo of a star, he was drawing the same picture three to four times bigger, on the drawing paper beside it, just like magic. He then completed the drawing with a practiced hand. In only a few minutes his drawing was exactly like the photograph. I was surprised and wanted the enlarger very much. As a matter of fact this man was selling the enlargers. I think, it cost about three hundred yen but of course I didn't have such a huge amount of money. "Uncle, how long will you be here?" "Till tomorrow".

I almost flew as I rushed home along the two kilometer or more road to my home and explained to my mother about the wonderful tool. "You can become good at drawing even without it". I cried and begged and received the money, and at last the enlarger was mine.

Using it as shown I was soon able to draw the outside border, but the picture was another matter. I couldn't draw the star as well as the man had. It must be that he was good at drawing portraits. I realized that, when he said that anybody could draw as well as he could, it was just sales talk.

A sharp point like a drawing pin, to press down on to hold everything in place.

You can change how big you make it.

Making a powder by scraping the lead of a pencil,

With a piece of wood with a sharp end, you trace over the original picture.

Original Picture

Drawing Paper

Pencil

then smudging this on, to make tones. Highlights (For the nose, for example can be made after, with an eraser).

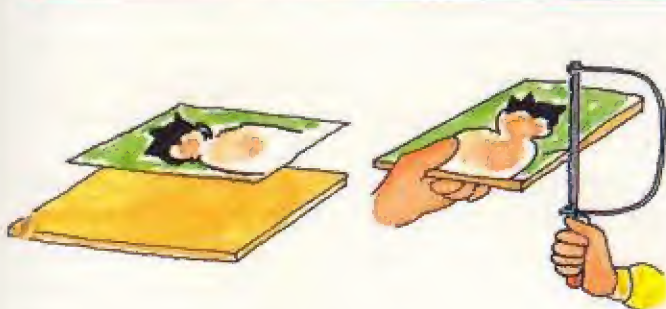
ITO-NOKO-GIRI-ASOBI (Jig-Saw Play)

They were sold in a set of one bow like handle, and several blades. I don't remember how much it was.



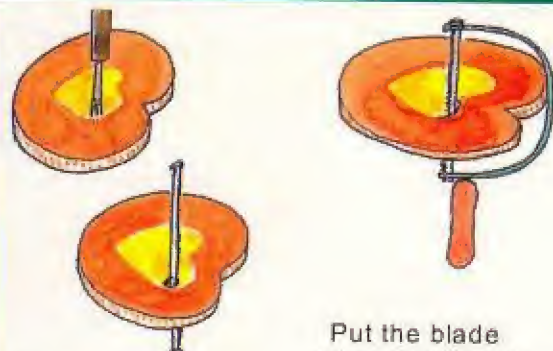
At one time there was a craze of jig-saw play. I'm not sure how wide spread it was, but around our house kids here and there had them, and we used to get together and become absorbed in jig-saw play. Stars, sports players, cartoon characters or just pictures that had taken our fancy; they would be glued onto a thin piece of cypress wood or plywood. We would then saw them out in shapes we liked. Gradually the shapes become more detailed as we tried to out-do each other by cutting out characters, making door plates and even book-ends. It was simple fun, but for us in those days to be able to saw in curves, was wonderfully unusual.

This craze came about the same time as the pantograph boom. To cut out something you had drawn yourself: this was the most satisfying creation. Finding suitable pieces of wood was a problem. We would even go far away to places where they were building a new house. If there were good pieces of wood lying around the building site, we would ask the carpenter for them. It is funny, but even now if I'm on a building site and I see a piece of wood just right for jig-saw play, I want to pick it up. I didn't become especially good at it, but I used these skills to make finishing touches to other handicrafts.



Glue a picture of your choice (a picture you've drawn yourself, a movie star or cartoon character) onto a thin piece of wood.

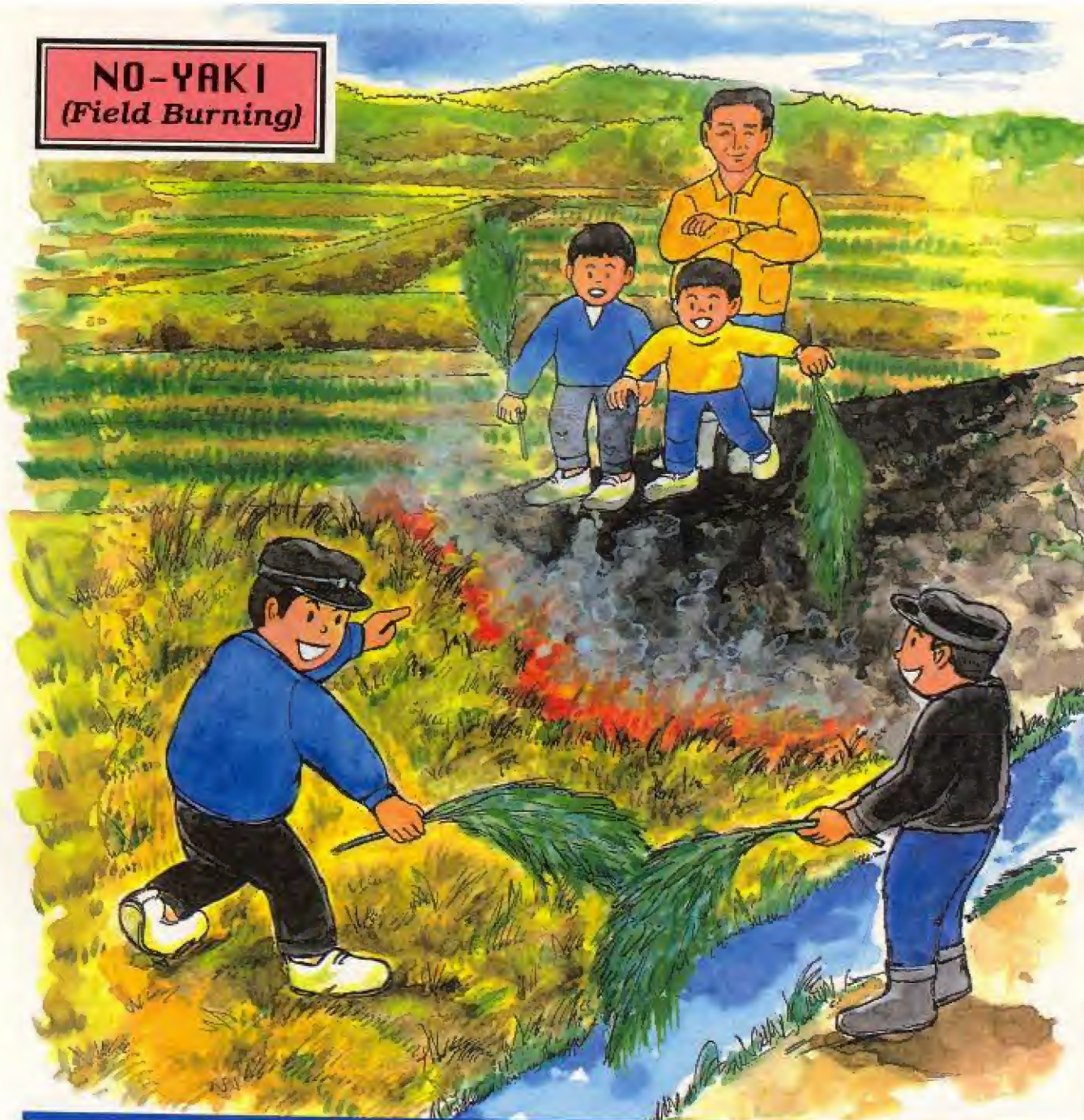
Cut out with a jig-saw.



To saw out inside parts, make a hole bigger than the saw blade, with a gimlet.

Put the blade through the hole, and attach to the handle again. Saw out the shape, and undo the blade to take out.

NO-YAKI (Field Burning)



In early spring the hills wake up from winter and on the banks between the rice fields little field horsetails peep through the dried grass, not being able to wait for spring.

At that time of year, in the rice fields and on banks, you can see people setting fire to the dried grass to do "Field Burning". This is necessary to kill harmful insects and to neutralize the soil. Because of this, although we would usually be scolded very soundly for playing with fire, during this time only, and with the permission of an adult, we were allowed to play with fire (that is how simply we thought about it.) We lit a bundle of straw and set fire here and there. If there was a bit of wind, the belt of fire would surge ahead in domino patterns or even seem like a living thing. Of course this 'Field Burning' had its own rules, and if these were not kept it could result in a terrible fire.

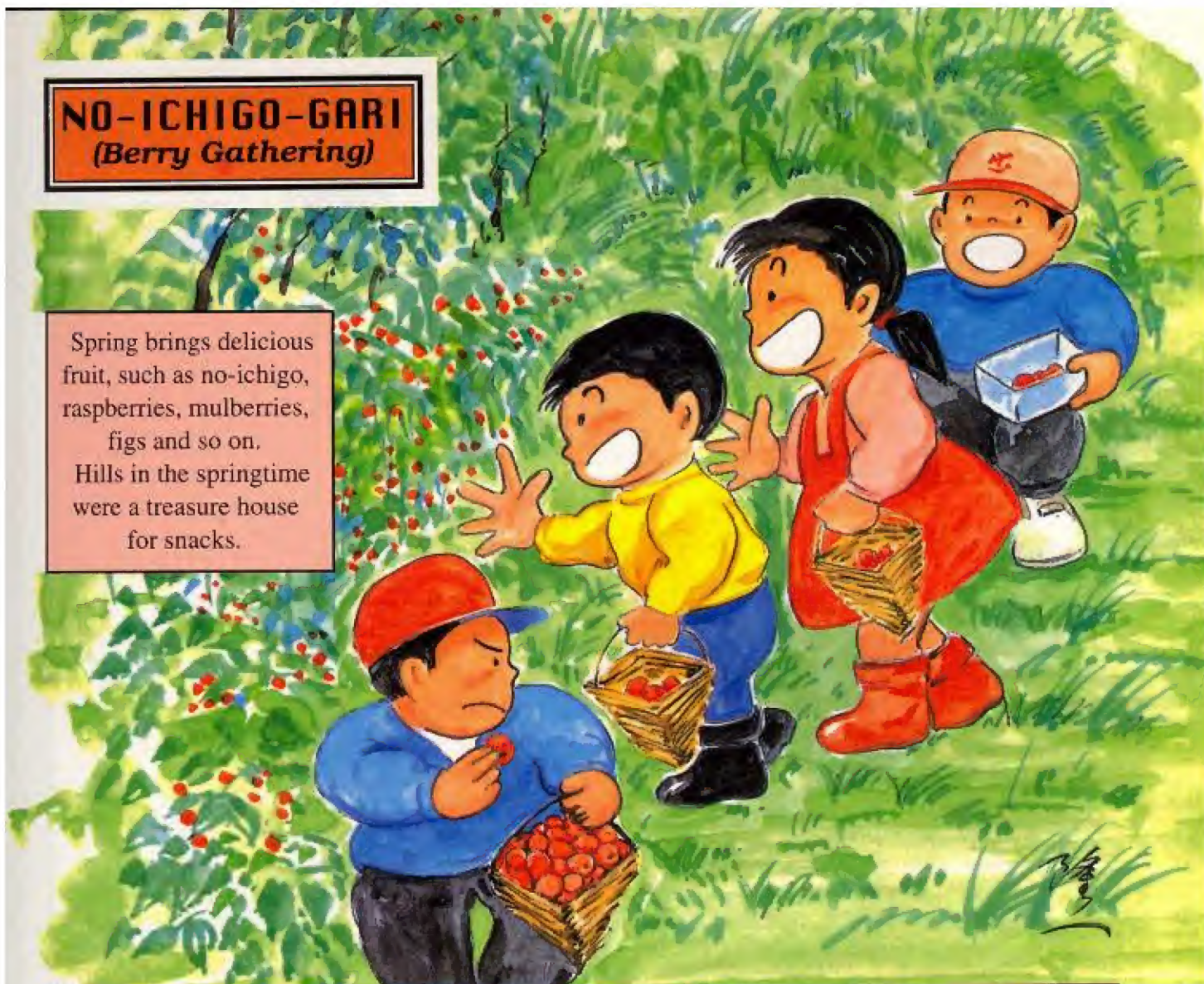
As a matter of fact, in my childhood several of us were field burning when a sudden gust of wind came up. Before we could collect our thoughts together the blaze grew stronger, some cedar trees caught alight and became a mountain fire. The fire brigade managed to bring it under control before it became serious but not before it burned tens of cedar trees. We were all rounded up and scolded soundly by the police. Since the child of the owner of the cedar trees had been in the group too, we were lucky enough to get away with just a scolding.

The basic rules are to take into account the wind direction and strength, to have damp leaves handy to put out a blaze, to have at least three or four people present, and to have the owner's permission.

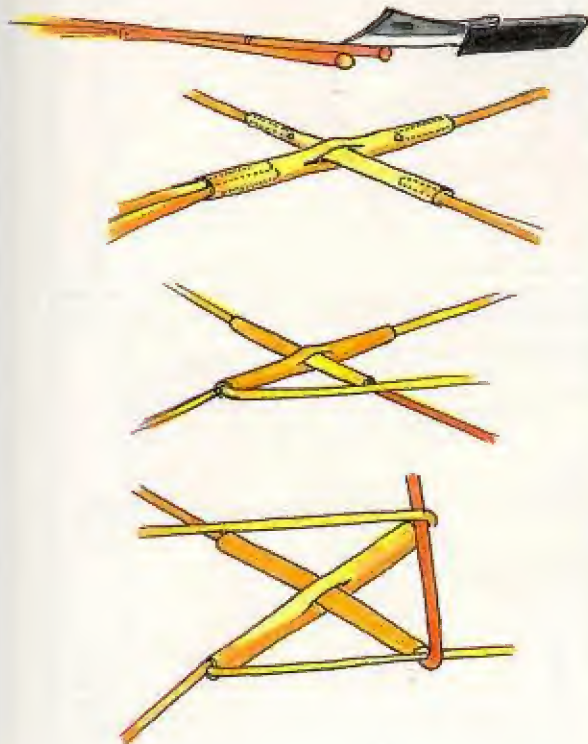
The end of field burning means that spring has well and truly begun.

NO-ICHIGO-GARI (Berry Gathering)

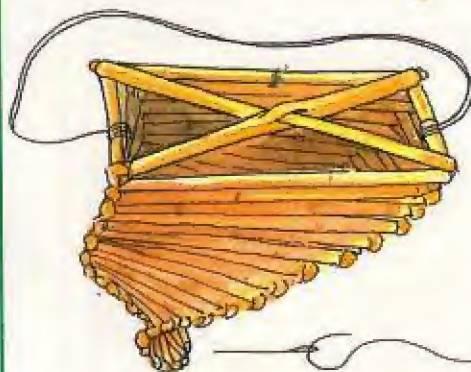
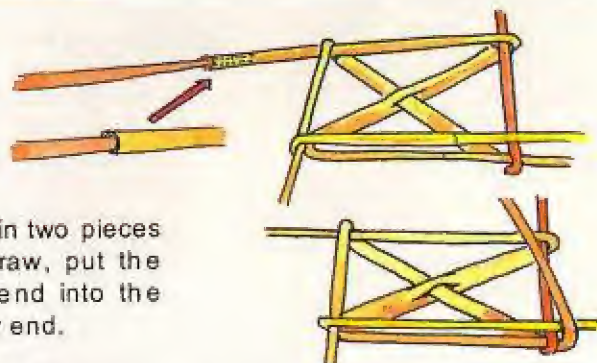
Spring brings delicious fruit, such as no-ichigo, raspberries, mulberries, figs and so on. Hills in the springtime were a treasure house for snacks.



A strawberry basket made from the hollow stalk of wheat straw.



To join two pieces of straw, put the thin end into the wider end.



To finish tie it up with thread.

There are many other kinds of straw making crafts, which I won't go into here.

KUSA-ASOBI (Playing With Grasses)

HAPPA-OMEN (Leaf Mask)



With the leaves of the taro or lotus, we would tear out the eyes and mouth, and wear them on our heads.

SASA-NO-HA-TEPPO (Bamboo Leaf Gun)



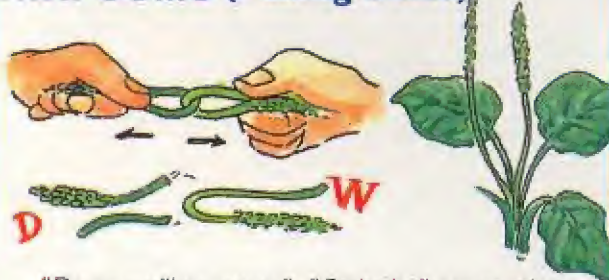
Be careful not to hurt yourself on the outside rim of the leaf.

PON-PON-GUSA (PON-PON Leaf)



I don't know what its proper name is, but as you can see in the picture, we used the leaf to go "DON!"

HIKI-SUMO (Pulling Sumo)



"Rope pulling grass" "Oobako" were other names for having a tug of war, with grass stalks. If your stalk breaks first, you lose. This was popular even in the school grounds.

MEBARI GONBO (Weather Strip)

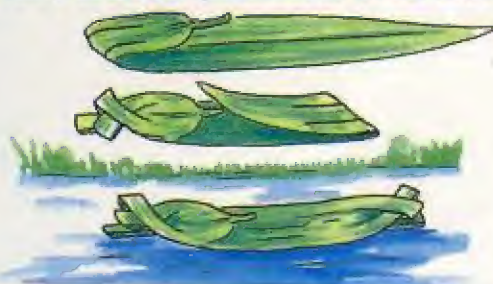
Wide Awake Stalks



I don't remember what kind of grass it was, but we would widen our eyes and place the grass above and below our eyes. It made us look so funny we would all have a good laugh. However if you do it for too long the eyeball gets dry, and your eyes start to hurt.

At night if I was nodding off while trying to do my homework, my mother would say to me, "Put Mebari-gonbo around your eyes and keep at it".

SASA-BUNE (Bamboo Leaf Boat)



We would all go to a stream and have races.

KUSA-BUE (Grass Whistling-Flute)



There were also other ways.

ENO-KORO -KUSA (ENO-KORO Grass)



We would play by making dogs or rabbits.

If you place just one piece of grass in your hand, then open and shut your palm, it will move as if it is alive.

TABE-RARERU KUSA (Plants You Can Eat)

It would probably be better to say "**Plants we ate**" rather than "Plants you can eat". Because of air pollution maybe it is not a good idea to encourage you. None of us were so poor that we needed to eat these grasses. It was just another of our "**field games**". We ran all around the fields, searching for grass we could eat, and then, laughing and talking we would eat them. Those times were great fun. Field horsetails, butterbur, fern brake and dropwort were all growing wild, so we would set about gathering them to take home for the dinner table.

TSUBANA (Ears of Reed)

In the fields at springtime, these were the most common plants we ate.

When the spring buds had been formed, but before they became ears, we took the soft white out and ate it.



GISHI-GISHI (Sorrel)



If you take the stalk between two leaves and peel off the skin, you can eat what is inside. It tastes even better with salt, so we always had some salt in our pockets.

RENGE-SO (Chinese Milk Vetch)

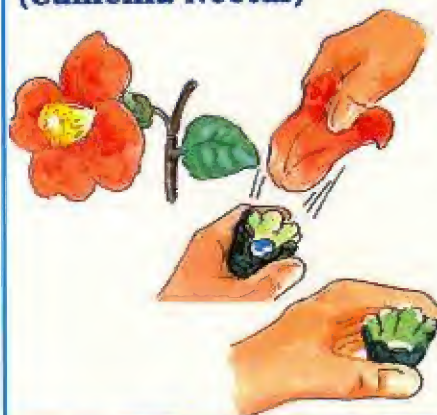


Pulling away the petals, we ate the remaining flower center.



It didn't taste very nice, but we had a funny pride about being able to eat it.

TSUBAKI-NO-MITSU (Camellia Nectar)



Pick the flower making sure to include the stem and pull out all the petals. In the cup of leaves left, you will find 3-5 c.c. of sweet nectar, which we drank.

TSU-KU-SHIN-BO (Field Horsetails)



Even now, this is a popular food. "TEMPURA (deep fried)", "OHITASHI (boiled and flavored with soy sauce)", and "NITSUKE (boiled with flavoring)", are popular ways. Although I remember gathering field horsetails a lot, and don't remember eating them so often.



FUKI (Butterbur)

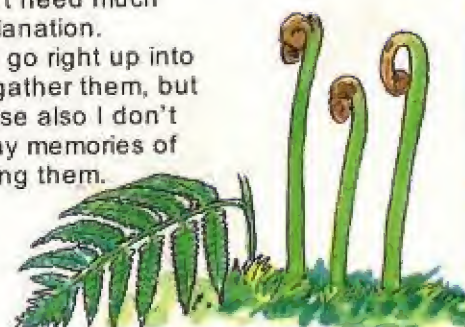
Taking the leaf off, we stripped away the outer layer of the stalk. It can be eaten boiled then flavored with soy sauce, or boiled with flavoring.



WARABI-ZENMAI (Fern Brake And Flowering Fern)

Being the main ingredient in wild edible plant mixes, this won't need much explanation.

We would go right up into the hills to gather them, but about these also I don't have many memories of eating them.



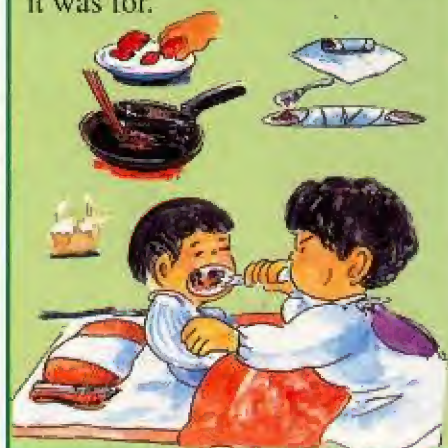
YAKU-SO (Healing Herbs)

There are many grasses and trees with healing properties. From somewhere or other we learnt about them, and slight illnesses and injuries were healed, **by finding and using them on ourselves.**

Scratches happened everyday, but more serious injuries (such as when I cut my arm on sugar cane leaves) were treated by using the mugwort extract as in the picture below, then sewing it up with thread. Even the nearest hospital was 5 or 6 kilometers away. I can hardly remember anyone having to go to the hospital for injuries. I remember when my friend hurt himself badly and showed me where he had sewn it up with cotton thread.

That was when we were in primary school. Luckily all through my primary and junior high school days, I didn't have to go to the hospital at all, although once when I caught a cold and had a fever the only doctor in our area came to give me an injection.

My mother made "Pickled plum burned black" and put it in the back of my throat. The next day my fever was gone. I'm not sure whether the doctor's cure or my mother's cure worked... well I know it must have been the injection; Yet the sour taste in my throat and the saying, "The more sour it is the better it works," makes me think that it must have cured me. The extract of the boiled nandina berry and bark was given to me for something, but now I don't remember what it was for.



KIRI-KIZU (Cuts And Scratches)- YOMOGI (Mugwort)

After getting scratched, search for mugwort.



Spit on it, then rub the leaves till you get a green colored extract.



Put all the extract onto the scratch, then place the rubbed leaves over it and hold for a while.

HACHI-MUSHI-SASARE (Bee And Insect Bites)- IMO-NO-KUKI (Taro Stalks)

If you have a bee sting and it is in a place which your mouth can reach, try to suck out the sting and poison.

Quickly find a taro plant, snap the stalk, and put the juice on the sting. Ammonia (used for a fertilizer) could also be used instead.



or ALOE

GEN-NO-SHOKO (Cranesbill)



I'm not sure what this herb was good for. But a man from a medicine company would come to buy it. To get some pocket money we would go to the hills to collect it.

We would pick a lot, and hang it to dry outside the house. Every few days a man from some medicine company would come and pay cash for it, buying by weight. I don't remember exactly but I think a bunch (about as much as a child could hold in both hands) was 30 to 40 yen. In those days it was a good way to make pocket money without any outlay of money. (This was big money, as in

the 1950's one U.S. dollar was 360 yen.)

As a point of interest, sometimes adults would catch "MAMUSHI" (Pit viper snake) a kind of pit viper, skin it and hang it to dry, and sell it to the medicine company man. (I think the bones of one would bring about 100 yen.)



KO-GA-TA-NA (Knife)

KOGATANA, another name is "**HIGONOKAMI**", is a clasp knife in which the length of the blade is 5-6 cm.

The pull-nob which is the stopper.

The small curved hole which you hook your finger nail in to pull the blade out.



The hole through which a string is inserted.

Serves as the grip and case.

Various types of them were sold in the shops. Basically, they were the same types. Some of them had a design at the blade or had the teeth of a saw in addition.

We always had them in our pockets when playing in the field or mountains, fishing, doing handicraft or something like that. And we always kept it in a good state of sharpness. These KOGATANA were the soul of a child, like the sword had been the soul of the SAMURAI.

The way to use KOGATANA, as seen in the picture, is as follows; the stopper is tapped on a hard stones or wood to draw the blade a little from the case. Then your finger nail should be hooked in the small curved hole and the blade should be pulled out from the case, completely rotating to the position where the stopper will touch the case. This blade position is fixed tightly and you need fairly strong force when you want to put it back.

When you try to return the blade into the case, you should do so cautiously not to clip your finger between the blade and the case. In the final position in turning into the case, you need strong pressure on the back-top position by your thumb, while supporting the opposite side with another finger. Because it is dangerous if the blade is opened easily from the case in your pocket, **you need to keep the width of the case's groove tightened** by using cutting pliers.



Children used to have KOGATANA in their pocket, but I never heard of any one using KOGATANA in quarrel or to injure someone.

HOW TO CUT

Push the back of the blade with your left hand thumb.



Don't use the right hand thumb which grips the case.

HOW TO SHARPEN THE BLADE;

Touch the surface of the blade tightly to a whetstone and push it straight forward repeatedly.



WHEN THE BLADE BECOMES SLIGHTLY UNSHARPENED; Used a fine whetstone or an oil whetstone.

WHEN THE BLADE IS PARTIALLY BROKEN; Use a rough whetstone to sharpen it until the broken part disappears and then sharpen it on a fine whetstone.

NE-BU-CHI-TO-RI (Taking The Roots Of Bamboo)



"NEBUCHI (NEMUCHI)" means a stick made of bamboo root. "NE" means a root and "MUCHI" means a whip. A bamboo root is as elastic as a whip, and so we called it NEMUCHI.

We played sword battle pretending that NEMUCHI was a sword. The farmers also used NEBUCHI as a whip to break in a horse or cow on the farms.

The teachers at that time generally used NEBUCHI as a birch in the class room. Sometimes NEBUCHI was used as a whip to beat a student, or was broken by an earnest teacher when he was teaching excitedly. Then he used to say gently, "Isn't there anyone who can bring me another NEBUCHI by next lesson?" All students were thinking not to bring another NEBUCHI, they knew NEBUCHI would immediately be used as a whip to beat the student who did a bad thing. And they agreed not to bring another one.

But there was always a student who planned to ask a favor to the teacher and so, brought NEBUCHI to him. But there was a jinx that first student beaten by the teacher with the new NEBUCHI was the same student who had brought the NEBUCHI. The results always proved so.

As seen in the picture, NEBUCHI (the bamboo root) partially appeared from the ground at the cliff. And it is necessary to choose well.



Then after heating to remove the oil, brush the surface with a cloth to remove the surface oil which has oozed out.



It's necessary to eliminate small branch roots from the main one.



Good quality one is adequately elastic, long and narrow, and is all of the same thickness.

The student who plans to ask a favor to the teacher brings the bright new yellow NEBUCHI which he has just finished.

"Teacher! This is the new NEBUCHI I just finished."



"Wow! Wonderful! Thank you very much. You are a good boy."

"Hey! What did you do? You are a bad boy!"

"Ouch!"

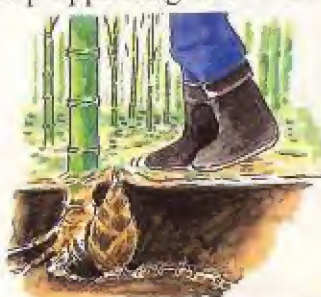


-I should've brought it after all-

TAKE-NO-KO-HO-RI (Digging Up Edible Bamboo Roots)



The best ones to eat are those which have only a small part of top appearing above the ground. You can find them with your toes, seeking around on the earth. **A proverb says only a dutiful son can find many, as it is hard work.** As I didn't want to be talked of as undutiful, I used to seek them as enthusiastically as I could. When I found one, I placed a mark on it and said, **"Father! I found one here."**



Remove the earth cautiously around the shoot and confirm the position. Then, cut them from the root and dig them up.



Boil them after removing the outer covering.

TAKE-NO-MA-BI-KI (Thinning A Bamboo Groove)



The season of bamboo shoots is over so rapidly that bamboo shoots grow to the same height as the full grown bamboo. In a short time, you can't identify which is the really full grown one. I thought my family would make much money if you could eat the full grown bamboo, because they grow so fast. You need to make space between each bamboo by cutting down large bamboo or old bamboo and laying them down to dry. This dried bamboo is utilized for many articles.

It is used to make racks on which rice plants are put and dried in autumn, or to make fences for the circles of cow training ground. The cut bamboo was utilized for the framework of the mud walls of the houses, and ones with the joints taken out were utilized for the water pipes throughout rice fields.



When the leaves of the branches wither, remove

Adjust the length of the branches



Put the broomstick, a narrow bamboo, into the bundle of the branches and insert a rivet into the broomstick so it doesn't come out from the branches.

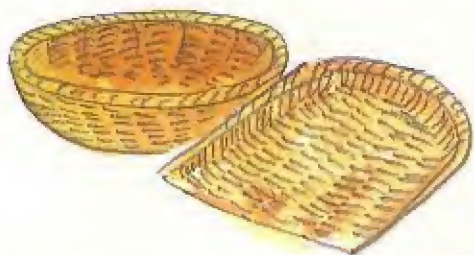
Complete TAKEHOHKI with wires, binding tightly around the bundle.



TAKE-HOH-KI-TSUKU-RI (Making Bamboo Brooms)

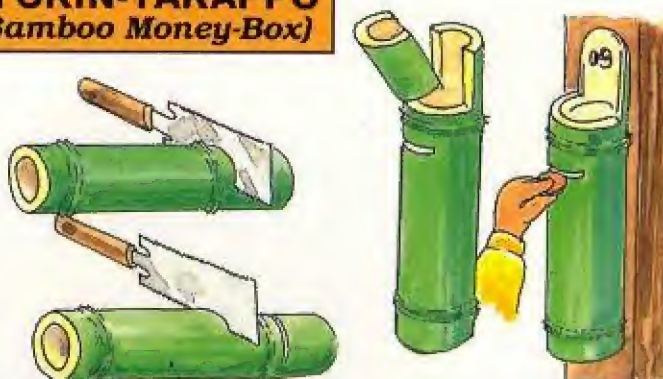
Branches of bamboo are utilized for making bamboo brooms. The students had to make their own and bring it to school to sweep the play ground. You wrote your name or attached your mark on it and stored them in a cottage near the play ground. And I have a memory that girls had to make floor cloths and brought them to school too.

TAKE-KOSAKU (Bamboo Crafts)



We couldn't make the bamboo tools used for agriculture but here are some of the things we often made.

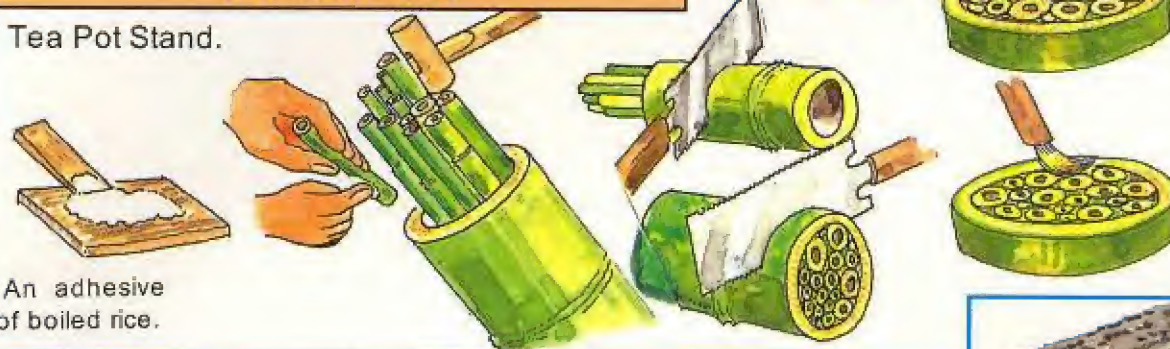
CYOKIN-TAKAPPO (Bamboo Money-Box)



It is easy to make, but as soon as I had saved a little I would want to count the money to see how much I had, and would split it open.

DAIDOKORO-SHOKUTAKU-YO-HIN (Kitchenware)

Tea Pot Stand.



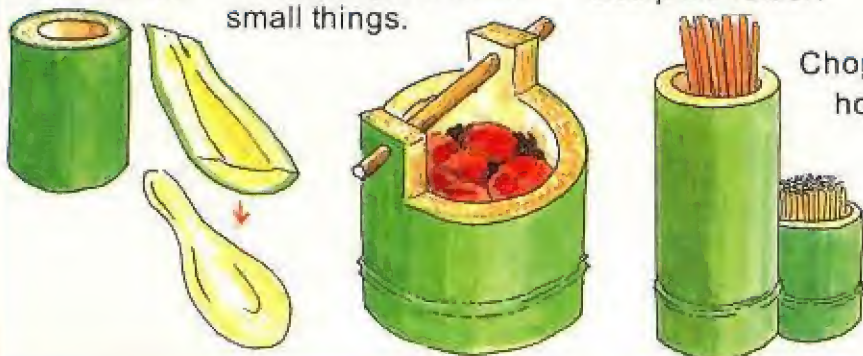
An adhesive of boiled rice.

Rice scoop.

Bucket container for small things.

Toothpick holder.

Chopstick holder.



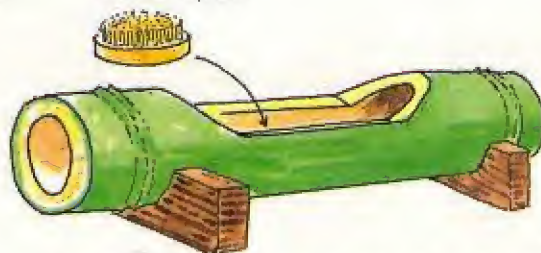
Although it isn't bamboo, we often used the wood from the **Japanese pepper tree** to make a pestle for grinding sesame etc.

INTERIOR DECORATION OBJECTS.

Wall hanging vase.

Flower spike

Flower holder



The wooden parts are made of lightly burnt cedar which is made by burning the outside of the wood slightly, then scrubbing it clean under water. It looks good if varnished.

TAKE-GAKKI (Bamboo Musical Instruments)

We made various things which would make sounds. The adults would make proper flutes to use in the village festival, but **we were happy** if we could simply make some sounds.

SASA-BU-E (Bamboo Leaf Flute)



TAKE-BU-E (Bamboo Flute)

I seem to remember making it like this, but I'm not so sure now.



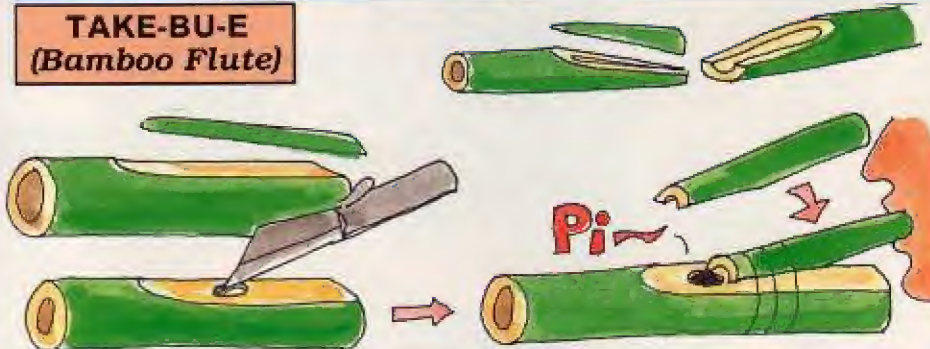
MIZU-BU-E (Water Flute)



The Bamboo flute in the picture above is simply attached to a water container, which makes an interesting bubbly sound like a bird-singing.

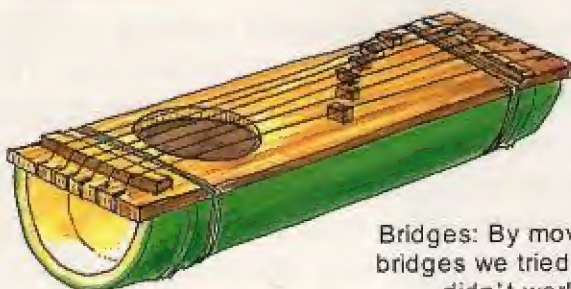
It was fun to use our fingers to make different sounds, by covering and uncovering it.

TAKE-BU-E (Bamboo Flute)



KOTO (Japanese Harp)

Onto a length of bamboo split in half, place a piece of wood, and use wire for strings to make sounds.

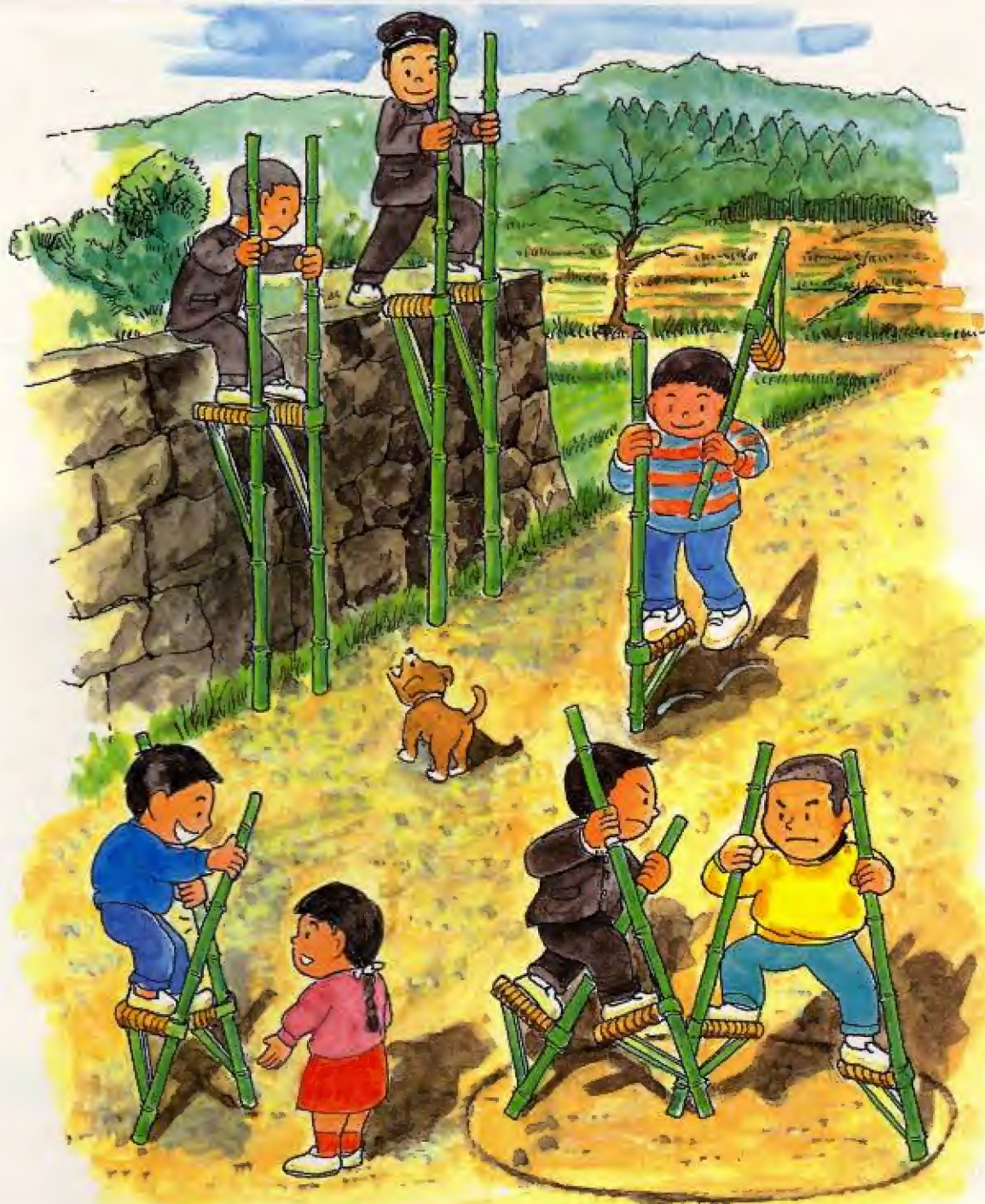


Bridges: By moving the wooden bridges we tried to tune it, but it didn't work very well.



As well as these, the rice-cracker man used bamboo to make a "gari-gari" sound to attract children. In my junior high school at that time the usual "rabbit chasing" in autumn used a bamboo-made tool that went "bata-bata" loudly. I don't remember how it was made.

A-SSA-GE (TAKE-UMA) (Bamboo Stilts)



In my hometown we called them "a-ssa-ge" and not the usual "bamboo horse". Even now I don't know why. However we called bees with long legs "assage bees", so maybe it means something with long legs.

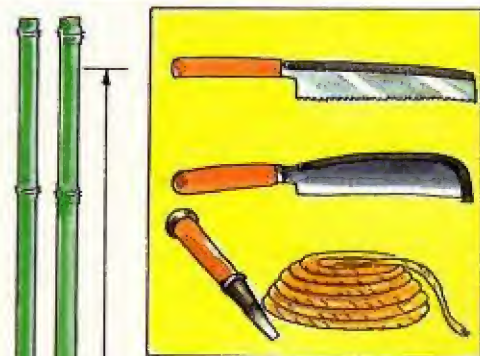
We enjoyed playing with stilts very much, and **probably enjoyed making** them even more. Going to a bamboo grove to find the bamboo, then deciding how tall to make them. **The boys good at making them would compete with different techniques.** Everybody had their own special tricks to make their stilts and then would gather to try them out straight away.

One foot hopping, banging a rhythm, "if you fall you're out-sumo", races, take each other's hat, empty can soccer, take the other's goal, etc. There were many types of games. We would lose track of time, as we played on. Bigger children would try to out-do each other in making extra long stilts. They would make them and get on them from the roof, and give us all a fright.

HOW TO MAKE STILTS

Your choice of bamboo determines how good your stilts are going to be.

The best bamboo for the two main uprights, is bamboo with the same thickness from top to bottom, more than two years old, and hard. The length for these should be your height plus the height off the ground you want your stilts to be.



Your Height.

Make sure the bamboo joints for the step supports are at the same height.

Length from the ground to the step.

A little thicker than the two uprights.



Two steps. A little longer than the length of your foot, and the circumference of the upright(A).



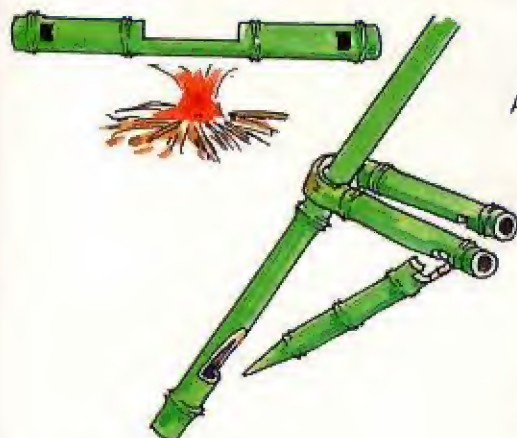
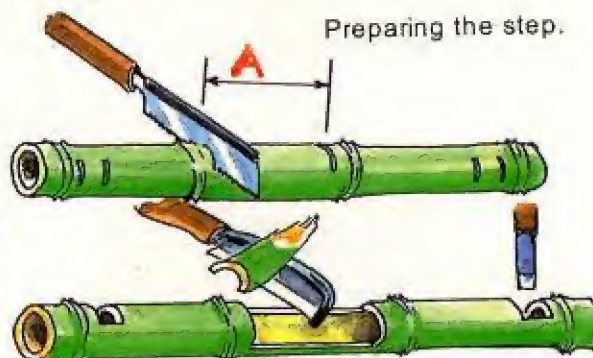
Make a notch at the bottom of the upright, to hold the step support.

Height from the ground to the step.

Step support: By splitting the bamboo in half, to make two.

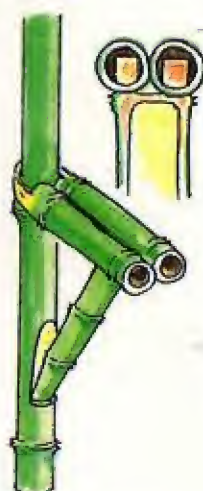


Preparing the step.



Being careful not to burn it, heat the middle part of the step, until it is soft, then bend it to fit around the upright. When it fits tightly, cool it with cold water.

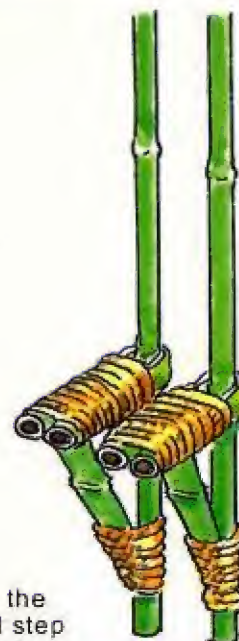
As seen from behind.



To prevent the step from slipping, tie it up with a thin rope. If you use wire to tie on the step support, it makes it even stronger.



Putting the step and step support together.



Finished.

TSUKI-TEPPŌ (Air Pump Pistol)

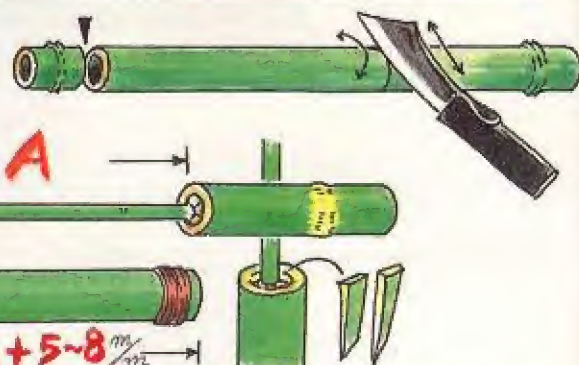


"Don!" "Dan!" with loud noises, an air pump pistol fight is underway. "Ei!", "Shuppan!", as the bullet shoots out, a little puff of smoke rises from the pistol butt. What looks like smoke is in fact the water content of berries being shot out under pressure. When both berry-bullets just fit inside the barrel, it makes a loud noise, and the berries come out with great speed.

For bullets, hack berries and various grass seeds can be used. For the times when there aren't many berries, small pieces of rolled-up newspaper can be used. **This was another game where making it was part of the fun.**



Cut by rolling.



Thin "me-take"(Woman-bamboo) often found along river banks.

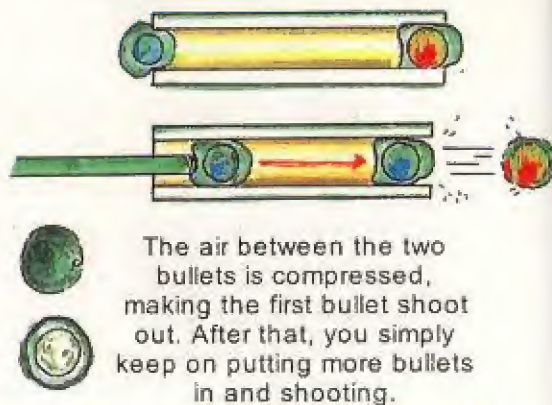
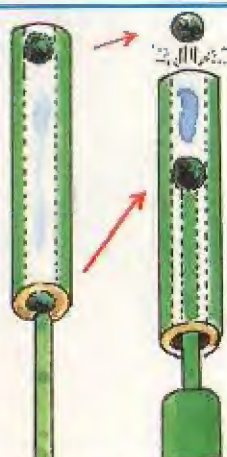
To stop it splitting, bind it with enamel copper wire or bind tightly with strong cotton thread.

How to push the bullets in:



Push the first bullet in right to the end.

Push the second bullet to strike the first bullet, sharply.



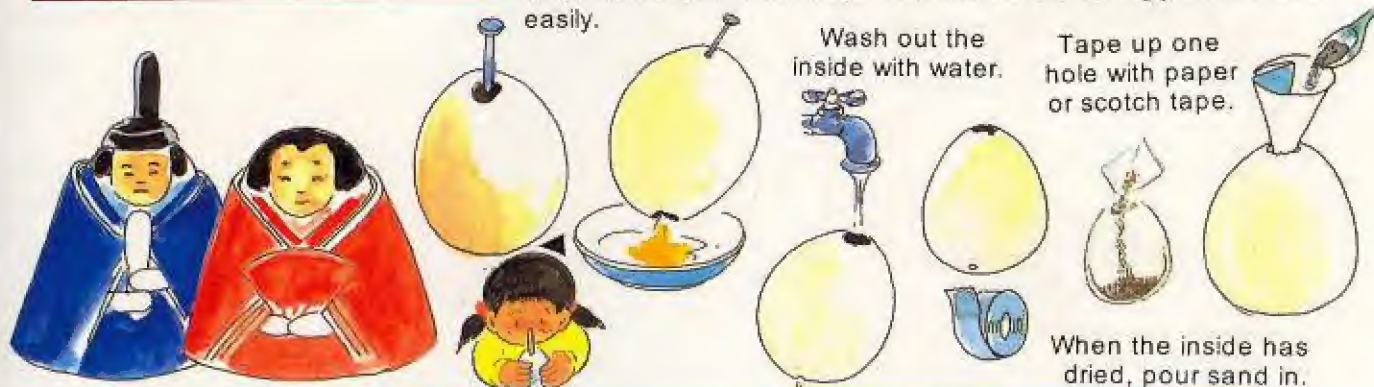
TAMAGO-KARA-ASOBI (Playing With Egg Shells)

Under the floor of the veranda, we kept twenty-odd chickens. They provided so many eggs that it was hard to keep up with eating them all sometimes. Every morning I would go to their coop and, saying sorry to them, take the freshly laid eggs. We would eat the still warm eggs on rice. We would play with the abundant supply of eggs.



HINA-NINGYO (HINA-MATSURI-Small-doll)

Firstly open a hole, but as small as possible. The best way is to suck out all the egg inside. If you can't, then make another small hole at the other end. With two holes, the egg comes out easily.



When the inside has dried, pour sand in.



As well as this, empty an egg as shown above (with only one hole) and pour in vinegar and leave it for one night. Then empty out the vinegar, and gradually peel away the shell, until the soft bag inside is left. Carefully putting the ash of burnt straw into it, we would then dash it to the ground, shouting, "Ninja disappearing in a cloud of smoke trick!"

Peel wax off and melt it.

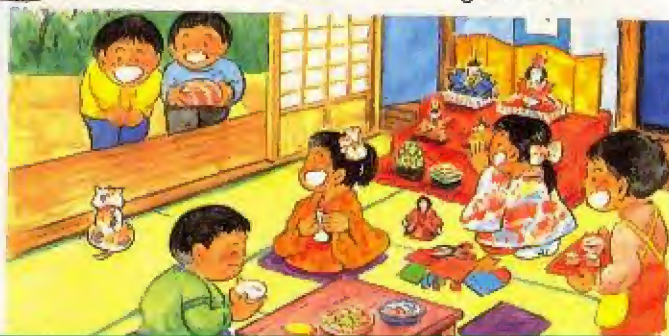
Pour the liquid wax in, to make a blanket over the sand.



Make a kimono with paper, and glue it on.



Painted shell type.



EGG SHELL 'Daruma' (Stand-up-again-doll)

Make as above, then paint it like a 'daruma doll'.



If it is a good shape, and you've put in the sand and wax right, you can make a good 'stand-up-again-doll'.



KUSA-KIRI (Grass Cutting)

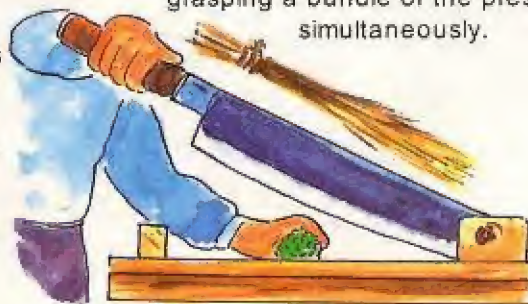


Spring had come and flowers were in full bloom. This picture shows small pieces of rice fields in a basin which looked like many pink carpets spreading out. That space was a special world to me. When I shouted "ΨYahhoow!" the echo came back to me from the mountains around the rice fields. I loved this home town very much and it is a holy place to me.

USHI-NO-ESA (Fodder For Cows)

Mix and cut Chinese milk vetches in the rice fields and straw into about ten cm lengths by using a cutter called "HAMIKIRI". "HAMI" means fodder. This work might be dangerous but I was cautious enough not to have been injured. Straw flies around as you cut and you need to press them around with another bundle of straw.

Cut the mixed straw with the handle while grasping a bundle of the press straw simultaneously.



Rice bran, salt, and water were mixed with them.

USHI-NO-SEWA (Looking After Cows)



Cows were used in the fields and also for the calves which we looked after for about a year before selling. This was an important addition to the income. The dramatic birth of the calf. Naming, looking after, and watching it grow. Playing with it, brushing and taking it to go bathing in the river. Although physically the calf grew bigger and bigger, it was still playful with cute eyes.

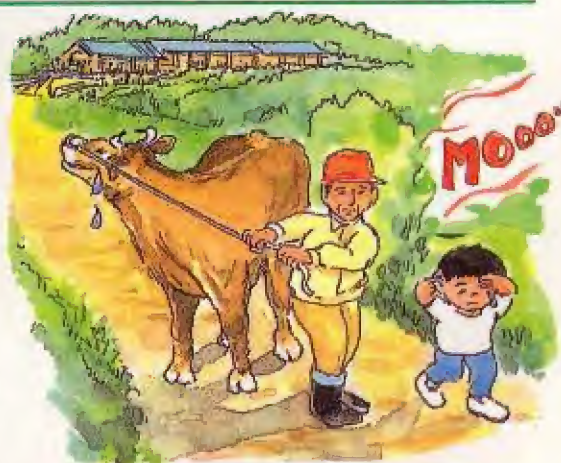


A fenced off area in the garden made an exercise space.

The day to put it up for **auction arrived.**



We took the calf to the auction with its mother. A price was decided on (I remember it as being about thirty to forty thousand yen in those days.) Sold! On the way home the sad moo's of the mother cow echoed in the hills. As I wanted to take the calf home with us, I remember saying to my father that he shouldn't have sold the calf if it was such a cheap price.



The mournful moo's of the cow mother continued for a few days.

Go-Ro-Go-Ro (Go Cart)

Brrrrrrmmm!

The sound of turning wheels fills the slope. All the kids rush down the slope in their own special hand-made carts. There are all kinds of carts; ones that speed down, ones that stop half-way, ones that have trouble turning and almost go over the slope.

We had speed races, drifting races...all kinds of fun. But our go-carts weren't only for playing. Like today's cars they were our status symbols and our trucks for berry gathering, persimmon gathering and so on. Anyway, most of the times we set out to play we pulled our much loved go-carts behind us.



HOW TO MAKE GORO-GORO

The materials. (If you don't have the bolts for attaching the steering wheel, you can make **wooden nails**.)



Saw off pieces of big tree trunk.



Sometimes we wrapped rubber around the wheels for cushioning.

Drill a hole in the center.

Gradually enlarge the drilled hole with a round chisel.

Making **the wheel shaft**.

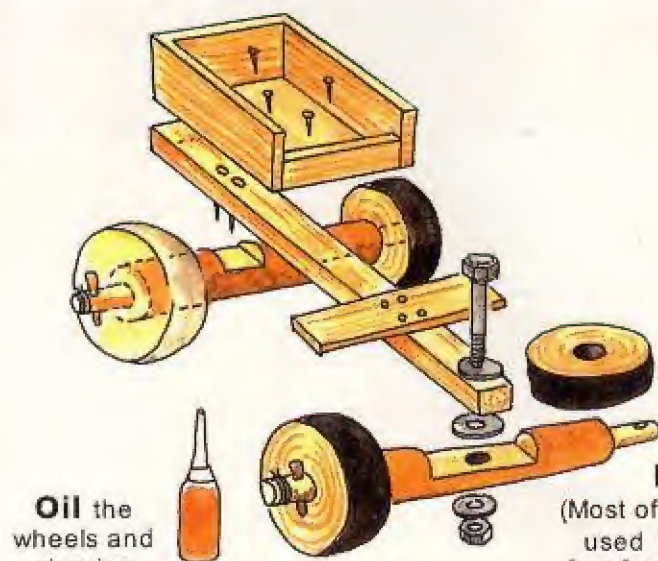


The steering wheel
(combines with front wheels.)



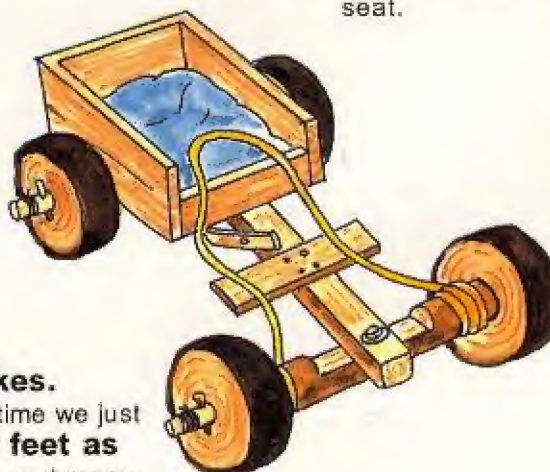
The driver's seat

was a fish box or apple box. Put a cushion on the seat.



Brakes.

(Most of the time we just used **our feet as brakes**, so not many go-carts had brakes.)



JUN-KAI-EI-GA

(Traveling Movie)



In spring or autumn **the traveling theater** brought rather old movies into big yards of farmhouses. Children were allowed with half a charge. Advertisement posters were everywhere in the village several days beforehand. On the cinema day I took off the posters with care and gave them back to the manager. Then I could enter for free. I also collected lots of posters.

At that time Japanese movies were very exciting. Sword-fighting samurai movies, (the actor ICHIKAWA Utaemon; the play "HATAMOTO-TAIKUTSUOTOKO" adapted to the screen by TOH-EI, the actor ICHIKAWA Raizo; the play "NEMURI-KYOSHIRO" adapted to the screen by DAI-EI,), Western movies by the movie company NIKKATSU.....The stars of the screen thrilled us..

The films sometimes broke in the middle of the movie, especially at the best moment, and the screen would suddenly become all white. People complained noisily, and the engineer rushed to connect it again. When he succeeded, everybody clapped. I actually waited eagerly for a break since I could get the strip of film.

CHAM-BA-RA-GOKKO

(Sword Fighting And 'Ninja' Make-Believe)



No other game excited us more than "**Chambara-gokko**". In spite of the unspoken rule of not hitting too hard, kids made bumps or cried, but a moment later they wiped their tears and joined in again. It never turned into real fights.

We were would-be movie heroes, **SAMURAI** and **NINJA**. Comic books also gave us lots of models. We divided into two sides and fought each other. If cut with sword, we had to 'die' and couldn't get up until we counted twenty. The rule was no thrusting or swinging. Hands, faces, and heads were not to be aimed at. The big fight scene took place in the field.

KATANA-TSU-KU-RI (Making A Sword)

We loved **sword fighting**. When several children got together, we quickly split and fought each other, yelling, "I did it!" or shrieking, "I'm cut!" etc.

We also tried to make our own good-looking swords. Some bought swords at festival stalls or toy shops, but **most children made them on their own** and **tried to have them look as real as possible**.

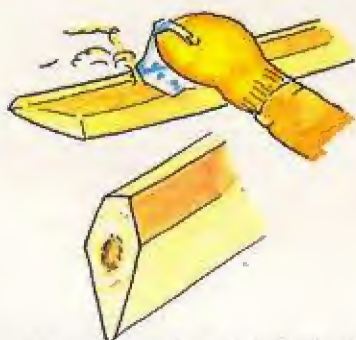
Search for an **oak** tree of suitable size and warp (curve) with patience.

Fix the tree between a wall and your belt, and move a hatchet to your body to carve into a rough shape.

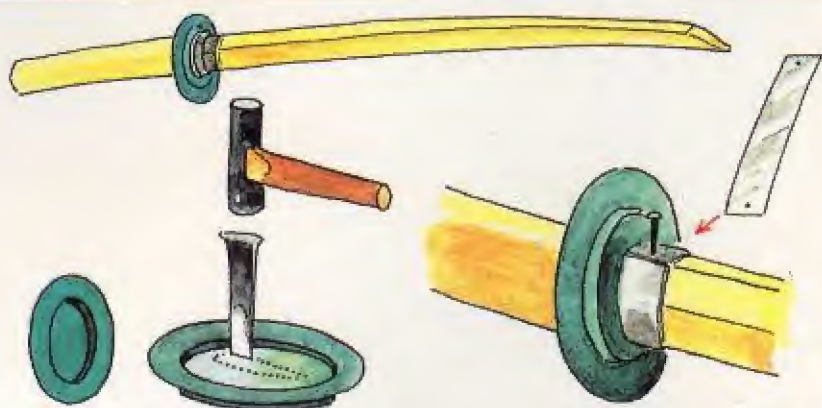


Carve smaller parts with a knife.

Make the surface smooth with broken pieces of cup or rice-bowl, and finish it with sand-paper.



The center of a tree is like cork, so do not get it come out on surface.



Make use of a knob of a sliding door for a sword guard. Make a long hole with a graver.

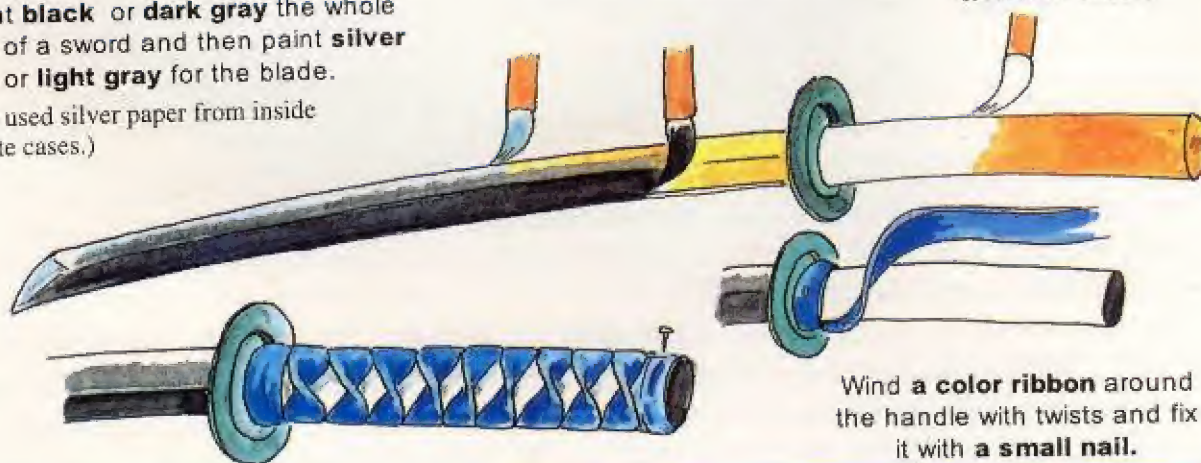
Fix the sword guard with a thin tin plate with small nails.

Paint with **enamel paint**.

The handle is **white** or **black**.

Paint **black** or **dark gray** the whole body of a sword and then paint **silver** or **light gray** for the blade.

(I also used silver paper from inside cigarette cases.)



Wind a **color ribbon** around the handle with twists and fix it with a **small nail**.

Making a sheath.

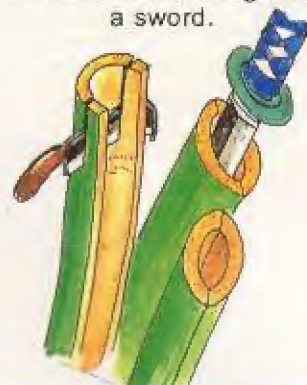
Look for a bamboo which suits the sword in size and curve.



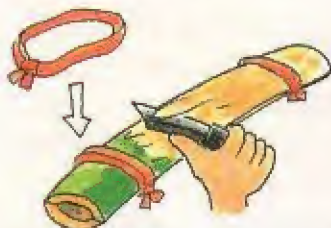
Cut out the bamboo a little longer than a sword. Split apart and carve out joints cleanly.



Cut them little by little to the size wide enough for a sword.



Bind them with rubber bands and carve the outside little by little. Move the bands and make the sheath evenly thin.



Be careful not to cut into hollow part.



Do a finishing (polish) with sand paper. Cover the sheath with black vinyl tape.



You may join the two with adhesive and tie around the sheath at a few points with wire. Paint for a finish.

Tie a braid to the sheath.
Ready to fight!



Carrying a sword under the belt would often split the sheath. So have another soft belt around your waist to carry the sword.

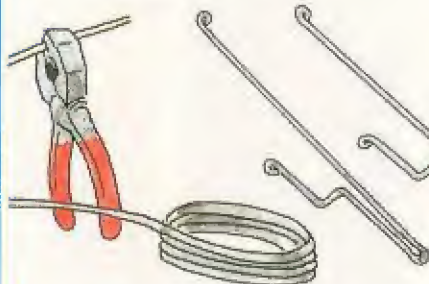


"YO-RA-BA KI-RU-ZO"
Get closer, and I cut you!

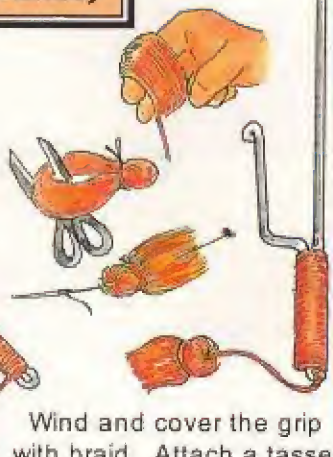
A cap of samurai is made of square (wrapping) cloth, or scarf. (Two pieces of cloth make a perfect one.)

JUT-TE (Policeman's Club of Feudal Times)

I made a policeman's club with some No. 8 wire which I asked an electric engineer.



Bend the wire to the shape with cutting pliers.



Wind and cover the grip with braid. Attach a tassel to the end.

"go-yoh, go-yoh!"
Now I'm the police officer!



KOI-NO-BO-RI (Carp Streamer)



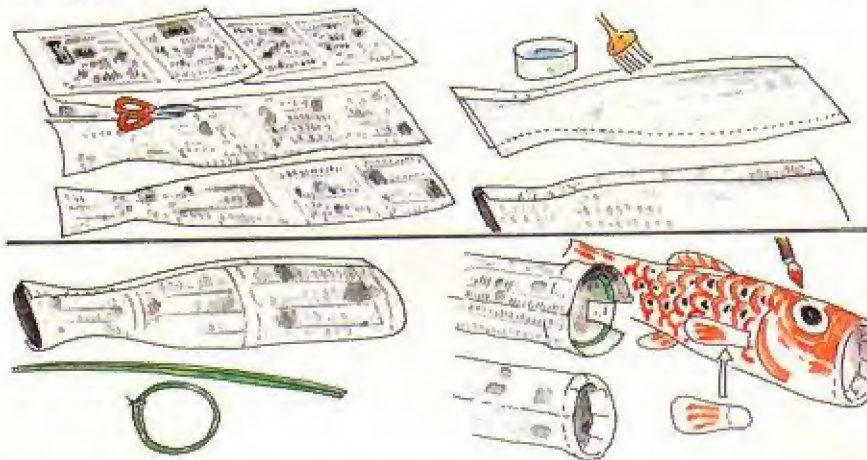
May 5 is a festive holiday, **boy's day**. The family of a new-born boy was proud of hoisting big carp streamers, which swam vigorously in the windy sky. I eagerly waited to make streamers out of newspaper every year. The strong wind tore them easily, but I wanted them to last for that day at least.

As in the well-known song, children cut a mark on a post of the barn to show how tall they had grown every year. I found that the marks I had made remained slightly when I visited our family home recently.

"Boy's day (Children's day)" was a very enjoyable day since we were **the center** of the family on that day.

Make a pair of fish-shaped strips out of newspaper.

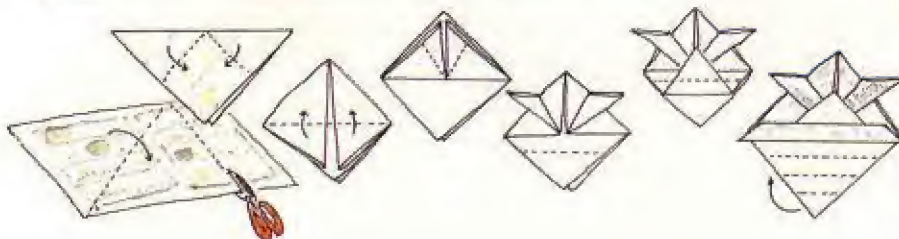
Paste them together to make a tube.



Make a bamboo ring for the mouth.

Paint the fish and attach fins.

KA-BU-TO (Samurai Helmet out of newspaper)



Make a square by folding, then cutting away the part you don't need.

Fold the triangle up.

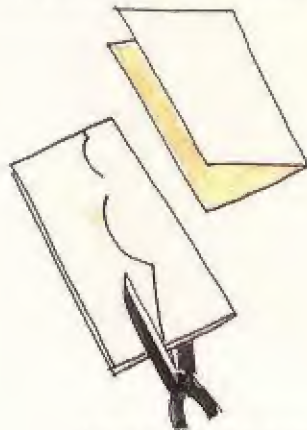
Fold up the back.



TO-N-TO-N SU-MO (Tap-tap Sumo)

Paper-made SUMO-wrestlers with popular wrestlers' names ("SHIKO-NA") had 15 bouts on a circular ring.

Fold cardboard and cut it into a sumo-wrestler shape.



Arms are to be folded a little apart, one higher than the other.



Cut the bottom so your wrestler leans forward slightly for fighting.



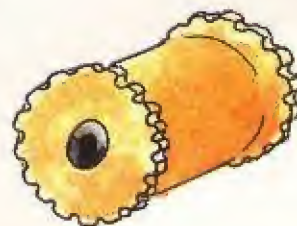
Make the circular ring out of an upside down empty box. Place a pair of wrestlers ready to fight with their arms crossed with each other.

At a starting shout of "Ready. Go!", ("HAKKE-YO-I NOKOTTA") tap the corner of the box with your finger tip to move your sumo-wrestler. The one which is forced out of the ring or falls over in the ring is the loser.

ITO-MA-KI-SEN-SHA (Cotton Reel Tank)

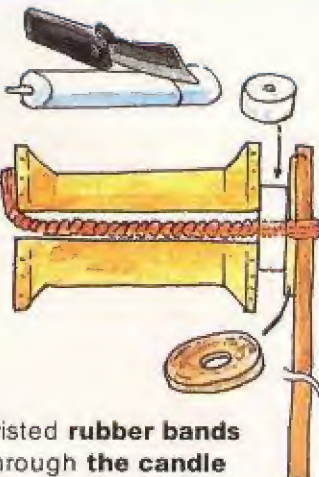
Get a **used-up cotton reel** from your mother.

Make notches on both sides to stop it from slipping.



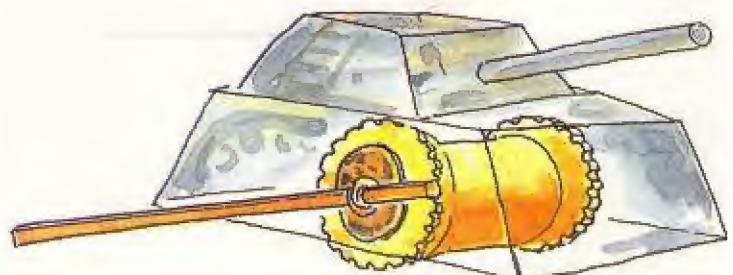
Hammer in a small nail.

Use half an inch of candle as a washer.



Wind up the rubber bands using the stick.

Cover the cotton reel with a paper-made car or tank, and GO FOR IT!



Get several twisted **rubber bands** from the nail through **the candle piece** and a **coin** with a hole, and put over **the stick**.

Compete with other cars on a flat space or make steep slope.

ON-JAKU-TO-RI (Talc Collecting)



There was a certain place rich in talc and I remember taking a lunch and spending whole Sundays collecting a bagful of talc.

I don't remember where it was.

I sure remember heading for the hill on a bicycle with friends. "Hey, let's go to the talc hill."

There we found good one or bad one, various kinds of stones. We rushed for better ones in excitement, yelling "here I found gold, again!"



Talc was used as a stone chalk. We drew white on wall, earth, and board etc. and it was easily erased by rubbing with hands or feet.

ON-JAKU-KAI-GA (Talc Painting)

The whole yard was the canvas for talc painting. Sometimes neighbors passed by and praised what I drew. "Hum! You are quite an artist." I felt proud and kept on drawing for hours.

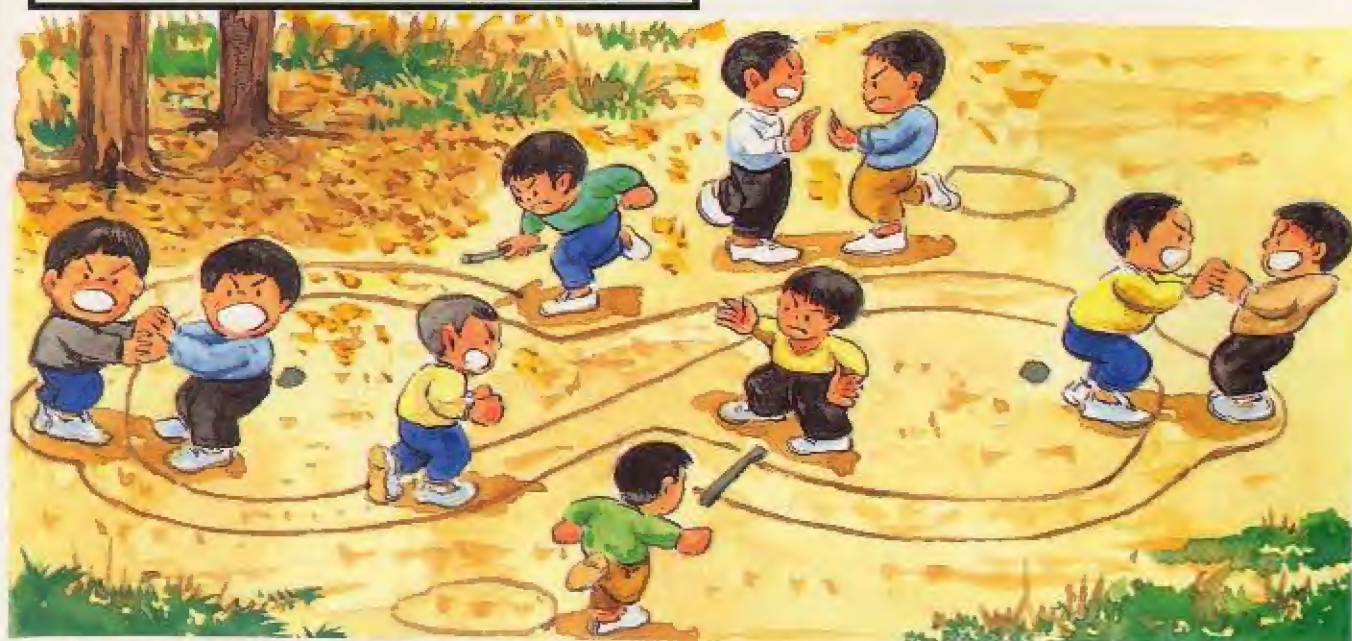
Every child had at least one talc in his pocket **to draw lines for various games** such as PACHI, BI-DAMA, PEBBLE-KICKING etc.

I also heard talc had been used as pencils at school years ago. Some talc was good enough to be cut into a stick and sold at stationary shops, but we used natural one, which was not always good to draw. Elder boys said, "bury it in soil for some time, and you'll get a better one."

I followed the advice, but it didn't work.



(HACHI)-NO-JI-GAS-SEN (Figure 8 Battle)



Draw a big formation like a figure 8. Divide into two sides. Place a stick to mark inner camps and keep treasures deep inside respectively.

Move with two feet on in inner camps. Move on a foot (hop) beyond the border sticks (outside the camps). A few neutral zones are set up to stand on both feet.

Outside the camps, you hop around and push or pull opponents to force them stand on both feet. If you step on a line or touch the soil outside the camp with a hand, you are disqualified. You can also pull out the opponents from inside the camp. If you finally gain the other's treasure, you are the winner.

KE-N-PA-TA (Hop Jump Game)

Draw circles up to No. 10 and two squares on top.



Throw a flat stone into circle 1. (If you fails, the next person takes a turn.) Jump into circle 2&3 on both feet, circle 4 on one foot, 5&6 on both feet....No 10 on one foot . Make a turn on two squares. No stepping outside the circles or squares, nor supporting with a hand. Return to No 2&3 hopping and jumping , and pick up the stone and jump to the starting point (without stepping in No. 1).

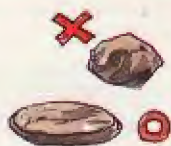
Next, throw the stone into No. 2, hop into No. 1, 3, and 4, and jump into No. 5&6.... On the way back pick up the stone on No. 4 on one foot, and hop into 3 and 1 to return. Keep on throwing stone up to No. 9 with hops and jumps. The fastest person to complete the course is the winner.

Some variations of this game were also played.

SHI-MA-TO-RI

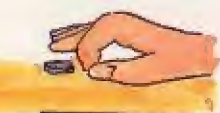
(Territory Expansion Game)

*Shima means territory.
This is a so-called territorial battle game.*

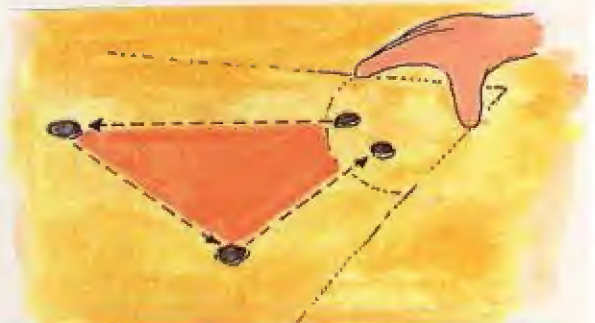


Each territorial base is a quarter circle drawn with a hand. Basic rule is **three flipping at one time**, but you can change it.

First, find flat pebbles to flip off for expanding territory.



If the pebble returns to your domain at the third flip successfully, the whole space inside the passage would be your new domain. If not, your domain remains as it is. If you flip too hard for a bigger land, you might not be able to return, so you have to be careful and well-planned. Take turns whether success or not.



The end line and the new territorial line are close enough within your hand span, it is added to your territory.



You can cross another one's domain and make an island. But if your island is besieged by another domain, it will be another's, so connect the island to the mainland before being sieged.



When all the space is occupied and no neutral land remains, game is over and compare the domains to decide ranking.

BO-TAO-SHI

(Stick On A Mound)



Make a mound and stand a stick in the center. Play jan-ken (scissor-paper-stone) to take turns. Take soil off the mound being careful not to let the stick fall.

You must take at least a bit of soil when it is your turn.



The one who makes the stick fall is the loser.

At the beginning you can take away much soil but later, you take only finger-tip amounts.



And the final moment,

"Alas!" Even before you touch the mound, the stick falls down. Still you are the loser.

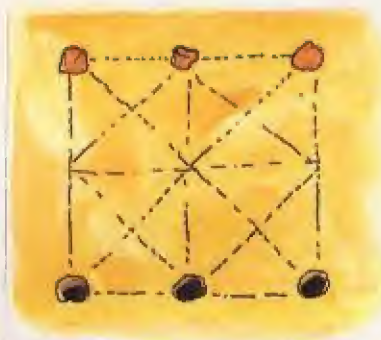


MI-TSU-GU-I

(Three Stones Game)



Draw the formation with stick or talc. Find 2 kinds of stones, 3 each.



Place the stones and decide the turn by jan-ken (scissors-paper-stone).



You can step in any direction at your turn. If blocked by the other's stones, you have to give up the stone.

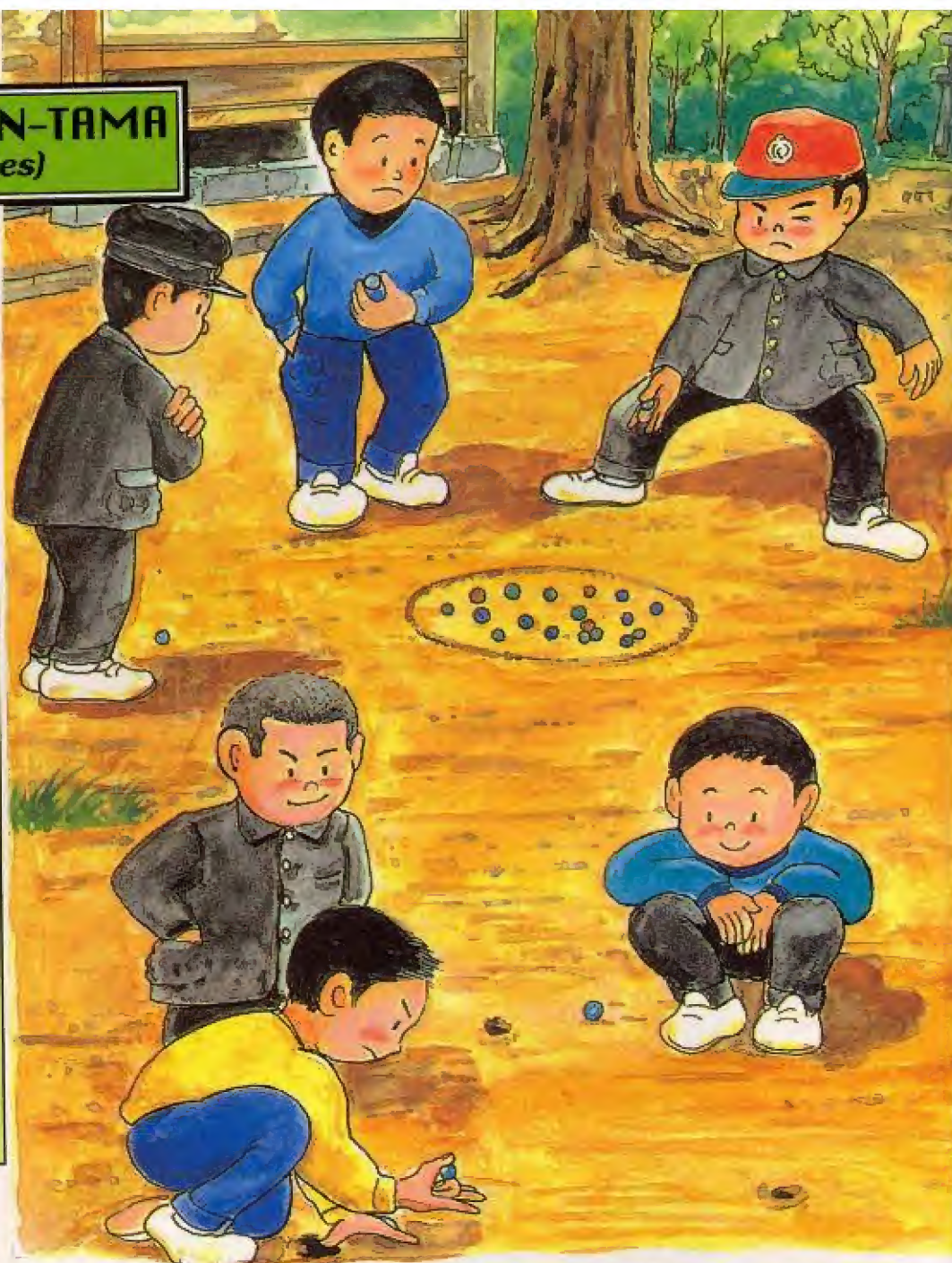
You have to move a stone in your turn, and you cannot get in between the blocked site.



If you take 2 stones of your opponent, you are the winner.

RA-MU-NE-N-TAMA (Marbles)

RAMUNEN-TAMA, another name is Bi-Dama, a small glass ball which is a stopper of a bottle of pop. I hear that the word, "RAMUNEN-DAMA," originally came from RAMUNE which was a brand name of a drink produced by a famous Japanese drink maker. I used to take out the ball from the bottle.

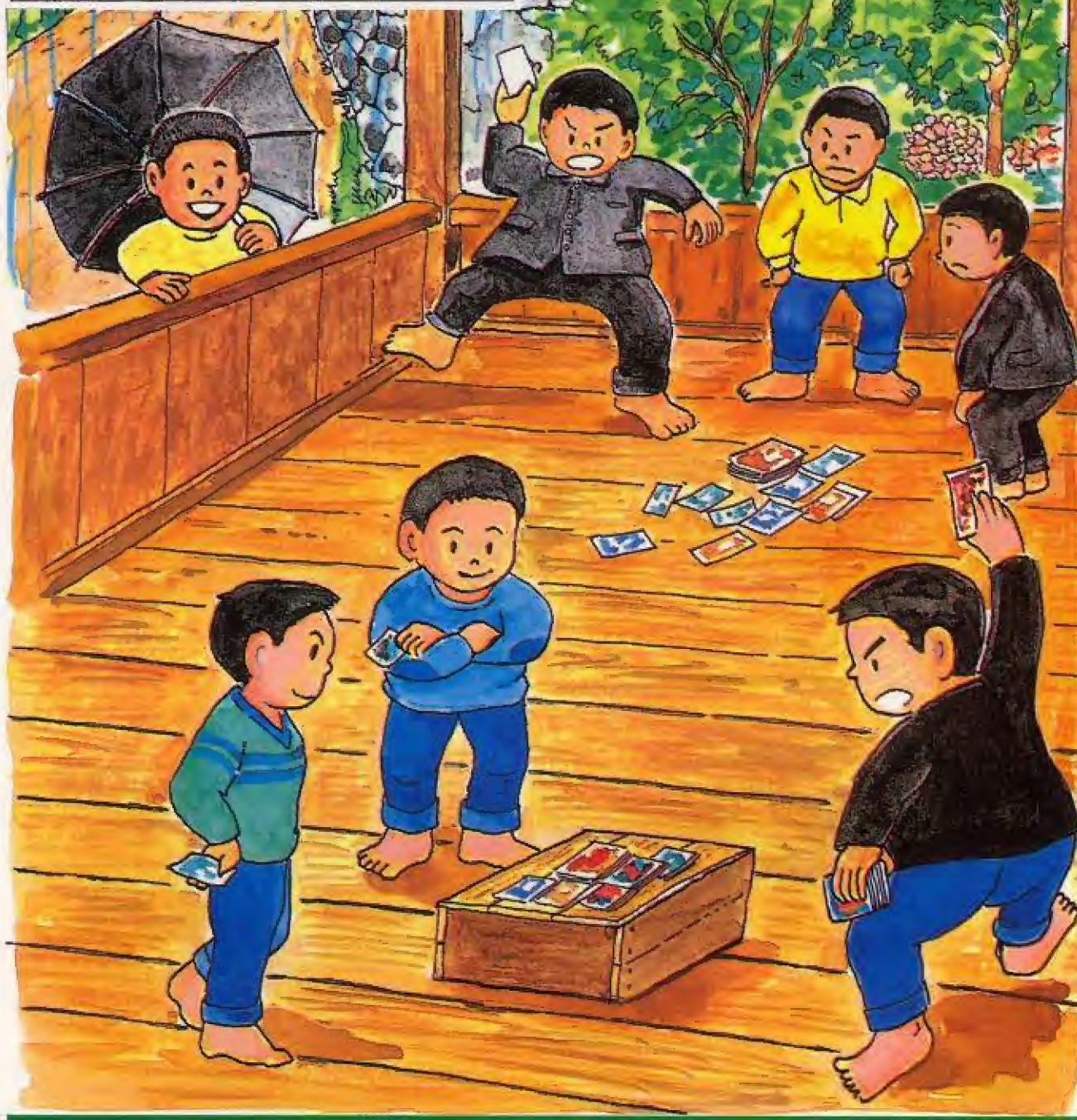


RAMUNEN-TAMA was one of two treasures for me in my childhood. The other one was "PACHI"(MENKO). Possessing a large number of them determined your status in a group of children; the more you had, the higher your position. For instance, a child asked someone. "How many RAMUNEN-TAMAS do you have now?" and the other replied. "I have XXXX--. Oh! I have more than you have."; and felt superior to the other. But if the fact that he had bought the marbles in a shop was revealed, he was teased by his friends. A child who won more marbles than any body else had, was regarded as **a hero in the children's world**. By the way, I had around 2500 marbles in my golden days and this was ranked as NO. 1 or 2 among a group of children.

An elder friend said, "When you bury them in the earth, they will increase." And I did so, convinced by him which, now, I think was so unscientific. A few days later, I dug them up and found the same number. When I told that friend, he said, "The time is not enough." And I buried them again for more days. The result remained the same. But children of that time seriously believed what the elder friends said.

In that ages, I never met with my friends without playing marbles. After digging up, I played marbles at the usual place everyday, not only on Sunday but also on week days. As soon as I returned from school I threw my school bag down and rushed out to the usual place. I was always absorbed in playing until I could't see the ball because of darkness. Sometimes I made a playing tour to the next village to earn "foreign currency."

PA-CHI (MEN-KO) (Flip-Cards)



"Go well!" with a hearty cry the flip-card is thrown down.

Along with marbles these menko were our great treasures. Also it was a point of pride about how many we had. **But just having shop-bought some didn't mean much- being and cutting out the shop ones meant being teased for days after. It was all to do with skill and winning.**

The usual MEN-KO had one side in color of a famous or popular character, and the other side in one color, with numbers, one symbol from the 'scissors, paper, stone game', etc. You could judge the popularity of a hero by whether he was on the MEN-KO or not.

We especially treasured the old fashioned MEN-KO.

Later on 'photo-printed menko' appeared but even now I still prefer the drawn picture type.

We treasured our MEN-KO and counted them almost like money. We would forget everything else in the heat of the game; when I had the most MEN-KO, it was close to 2000.

KI-NO-UE-SUMIKA

(Hideout on Tree)



It wasn't as if we didn't have houses to live in. Three or four good friends would get together and steal away to the various trees to build a hideout- hut. Home from school we would head straight for the hut to play at adventures. We didn't build our huts too far away from home so as to be able to get home quickly in a sudden shower, or after playing till dusk, even laden down with toys and comics.

We just liked to have our own special place. On Sundays we would even take along a lunch of rice balls and spend the whole day playing happily. We would also go visiting or invite other groups over.

Method (an example)

This is only an example, as the style varies with the different trees. I also made many tree-huts for one person.

**Try not to interfere with the tree,
and keep it as near to its natural
state as possible.
No nails used.**

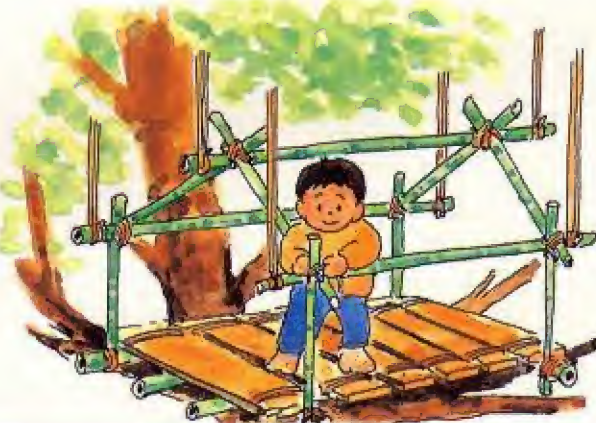


Choose a tree with hard wood (camellia, oak etc) and a good spread of branches. Fitting in with the branch pattern plan the hut.



Make the floor **as big as possible to stand up to more weight**. The framework is bamboo, then old planks of wood are used.

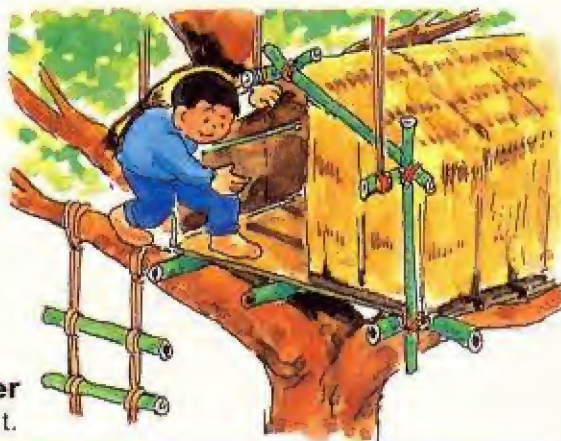
The roof framework is tied from branches.



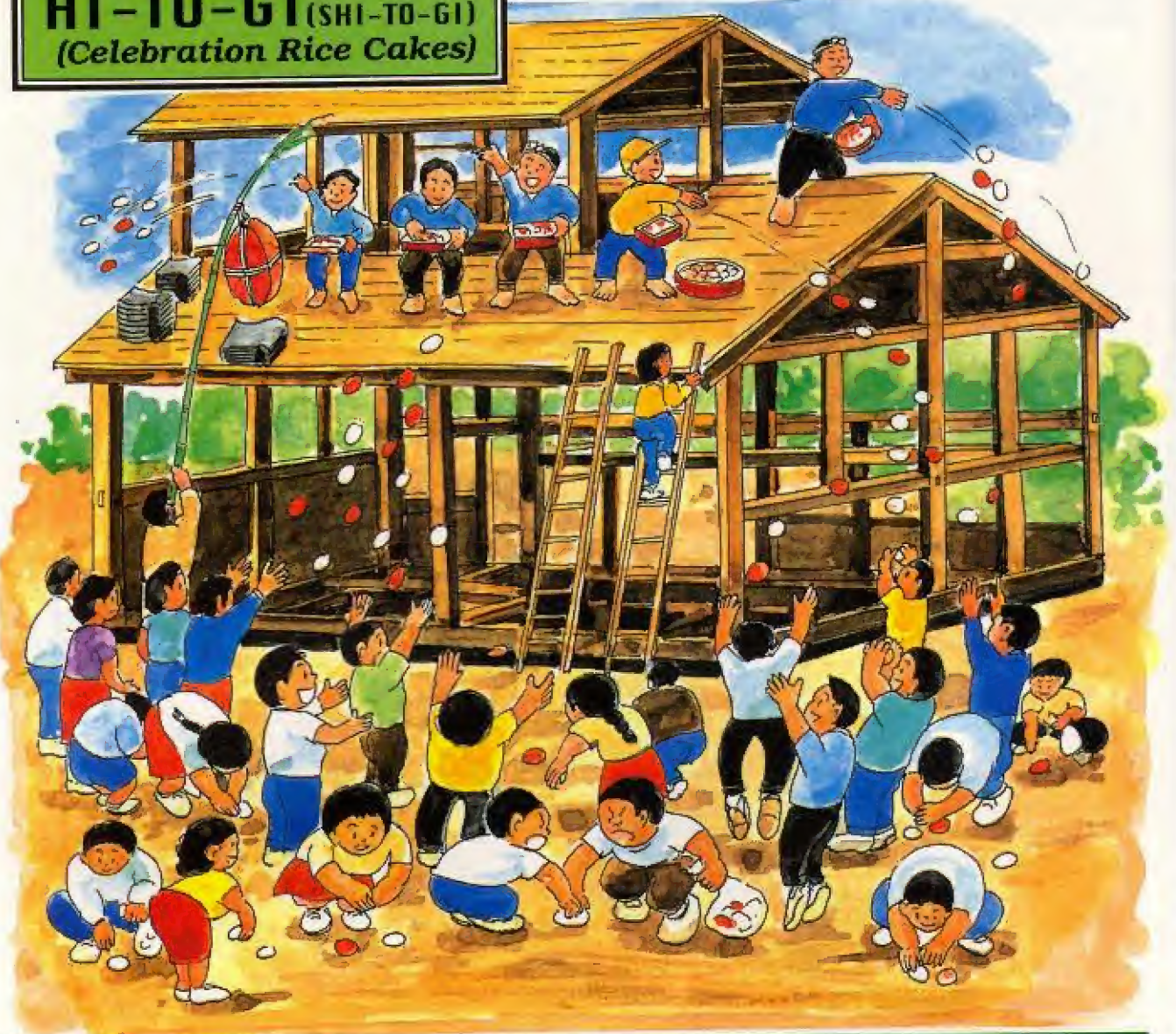
Woven rice plant straws mats cover the framework.



A rope ladder
completes the hut.



HI-TO-GI (SHI-TO-GI) (Celebration Rice Cakes)



HI-TO-GI means the rice-cakes which are thrown from the roof at the ceremony of the main house beams hoisting, to celebrate.

A few days before it happens the news goes around that somewhere or other will have a 'hitogi'. Sometimes it was a long way away.

On the day, even if we've heard it will be around 3 o'clock, by midday people were already drifting together. After a while, "Ain't it time yet": people will start asking. The carpenters and owner say, "Not yet." I'm sure they had their reasons but I was sure they were just teasing us. And then sure enough, half past three and things begin. The carpenters and owner drink sake and do ceremonial things on the roof. And then lacquered boxes full of rice-cakes are passed up to the roof on long bamboo poles. Several of the carpenters hold the boxes.

The attention of everyone below is on them.

First of all big rice-cakes (diameter 15 cm ~) are thrown in each direction: East, West, South, North. There are only four of these big ones so if you get one it is something to boastful talks about for days. Some people even went hours early, worked out the four directions and stood in the best possible place.

After the four big direction rice-cakes, red and white small rice-cakes (diameter about 5 cm) come down like rain.

"Uncle, over here!" people call out, and **frantically gather them up.** It is all over in about ten minutes. Counting them and talking over the fun, we all go home.

MIZU-KIRI-ISHI-NAGE (Skipping Stones)

Find a flat stone and throw it underhand. You see who can throw to get the most skips, or who throws the farthest.



YO-YO (Yo-yo)

Playing with yo-yos was popular. There were many different techniques such as "taking the dog for a walk" and "swinging". We spent hours practicing to meet the challenge of new techniques.



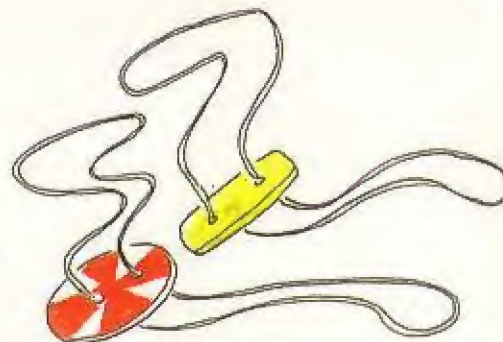
KEN-DA-MA-ASOBI (Japanese Style Cup And Ball)

Another popular past time. We would compete to see who could get the ball in the cup the most times running, and other techniques.



BUN-BUN (Button Twirling)

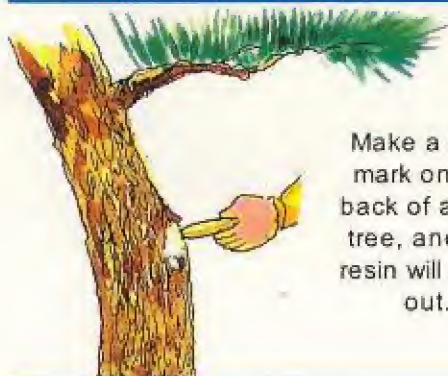
We used many different things as long as it had two holes and a string could be passed through it. The string was tied in a circle and twisted a little to begin with. Then using the tension of pulling the hands apart or together, keep it twirling.



It would make a noise like 'Boom, boom'. We would make them from buttons, paper, wood etc.

MATSU-YANI-BUNE

(Pine Resin Boat)



Make a small mark on the back of a pine tree, and the resin will come out.

If you put a little bit of **pine resin** on a twig or bamboo leaf, then float it on water, it will suddenly spurt away. We also floated pine needles just as they were.

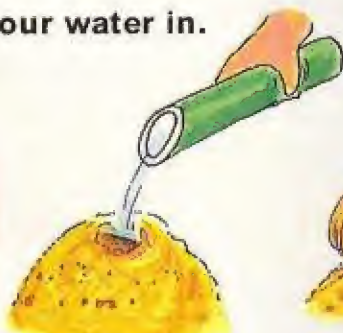
If you put resin in the water, it suddenly ripples and widens out. By the same characteristic, if you put something with weight on, it will move forward. The resin on the water shines like a rainbow.

(The picture is of the local well and washing place in my home town.)

DORO-UTSUWA-ZUKURI (Mud Bowl Making)



Pour water in.



Make a little mud hill and scoop away a little from the top. This is just another type of mud playing, but the fun is that you don't know what kind of bowl you have until you dig it out.

After a while careful, so we carefully line them up somewhere.

We would compare sizes and numbers for the best.

JOH-KI-SEN (Steam Boat)

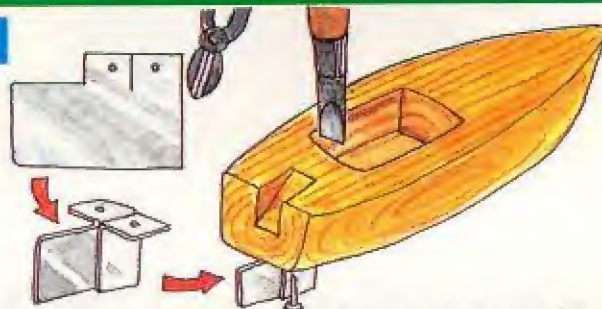
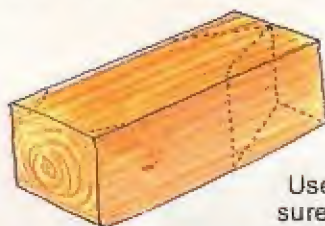
As I only made one or two of these, I don't remember the method very well, but I did make many boats with a twisted rubber-band screw drive.

I made many other kinds of boats too, but I've forgotten them.



HOW TO MAKE "JOH-KI-SEN"

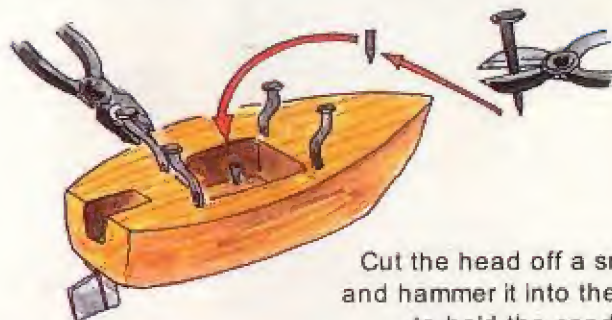
Take a block of wood and cut it to the general shape by saw and then knife.



Use tin or zinc for **the rudder**. To make sure that the boat will come back to you, bend it a little from the start.

Carve out the inside as deep as possible but be careful not to go through the bottom!

Hammer in four nails and bend them so that the can for the steam sits securely on top.



Cut the head off a small nail and hammer it into the bottom, to hold the candle.

Make a hole.

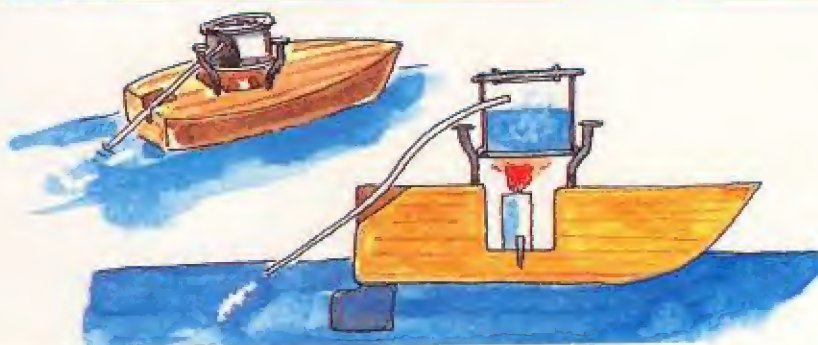


Use a small can of the type used for paint or curry powder.

Find a brass or aluminum tube. (We found ours from the rubbish.)



Put water in the can, and light the candle. When the water boils, the boat will slowly begin to move. When the water boils dry, the boat will stop, so it is best to play with it in a shallow pond so that you can wade out to get it if necessary.



DA-RU-MA-SAN-GA-KO-RO-N-DA (Statues)

DA-RU-MA-SA-N-GA-KO-RO-N-DA!

This is one of many playing chants and has exactly ten syllables. There were many other chants but I won't go into them here.

The person who is "it" turns his back on the others, closes his eyes and says "Daruma-san ga koronda," and counts to ten, then suddenly turns around.



Then the others, who are creeping up on him suddenly freeze and turn into statues. If a single part of someone's body moves, they will be called out, and must become "chained" to "it".



The person "chained" to "it" has to wait to be saved. "It" again counts and the ones not yet caught come closer. With chanting we used all sorts of tricks like starting out chanting slowly, then suddenly speeding up and turning round.



In order to save someone chained to "it" you must cut the hand that is chained to "it". If everybody gets caught, the first chained person becomes the new "it". If you do get saved, you run away as fast as you can.



"It" shouts "STOP" and everybody must **freeze** immediately. It doesn't matter if your top half moves, but on no account may you move your legs.





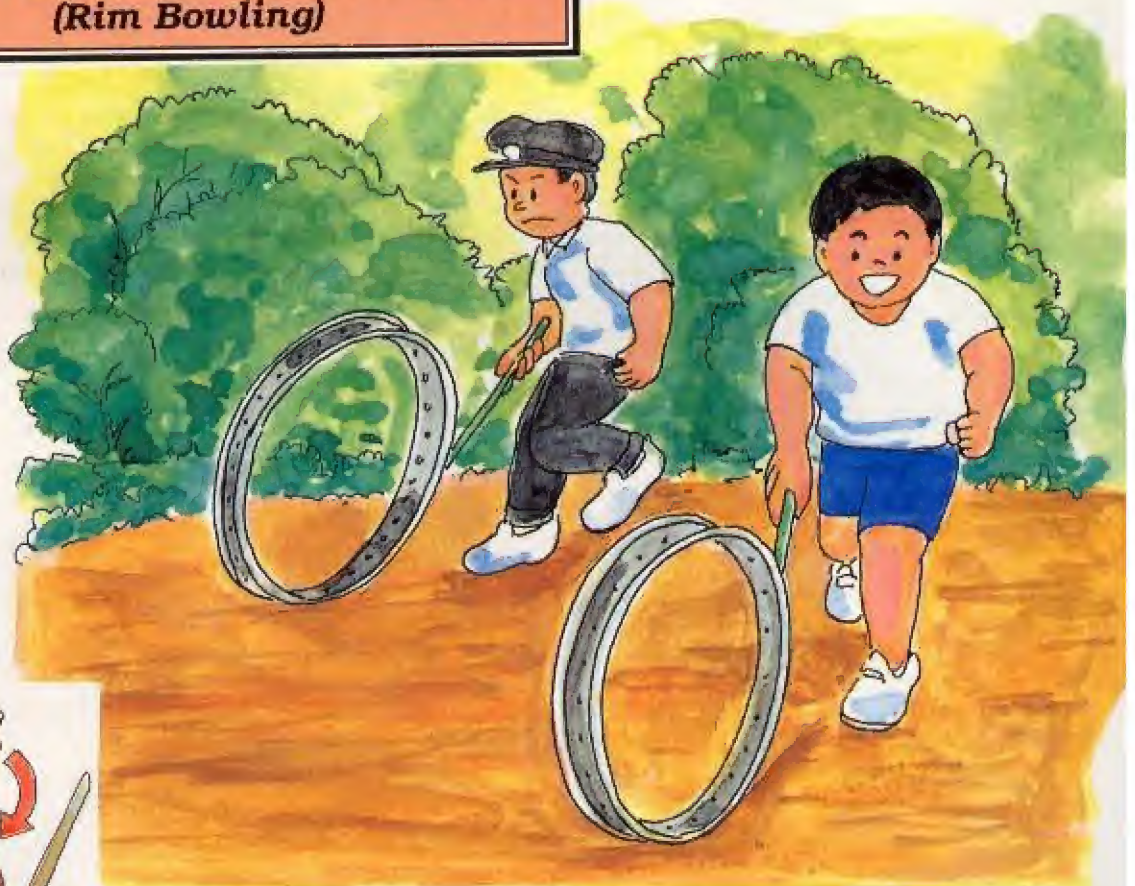
"It" chooses the nearest person, and tries to reach them in three steps. If he can touch someone, they are the next "it". If "it" can't touch anybody, they must be "it" for another round.

If nobody is caught and becomes chained, then "it" stays on for another round.



RI-MU-KO-RO-GA-SHI (Rim Bowling)

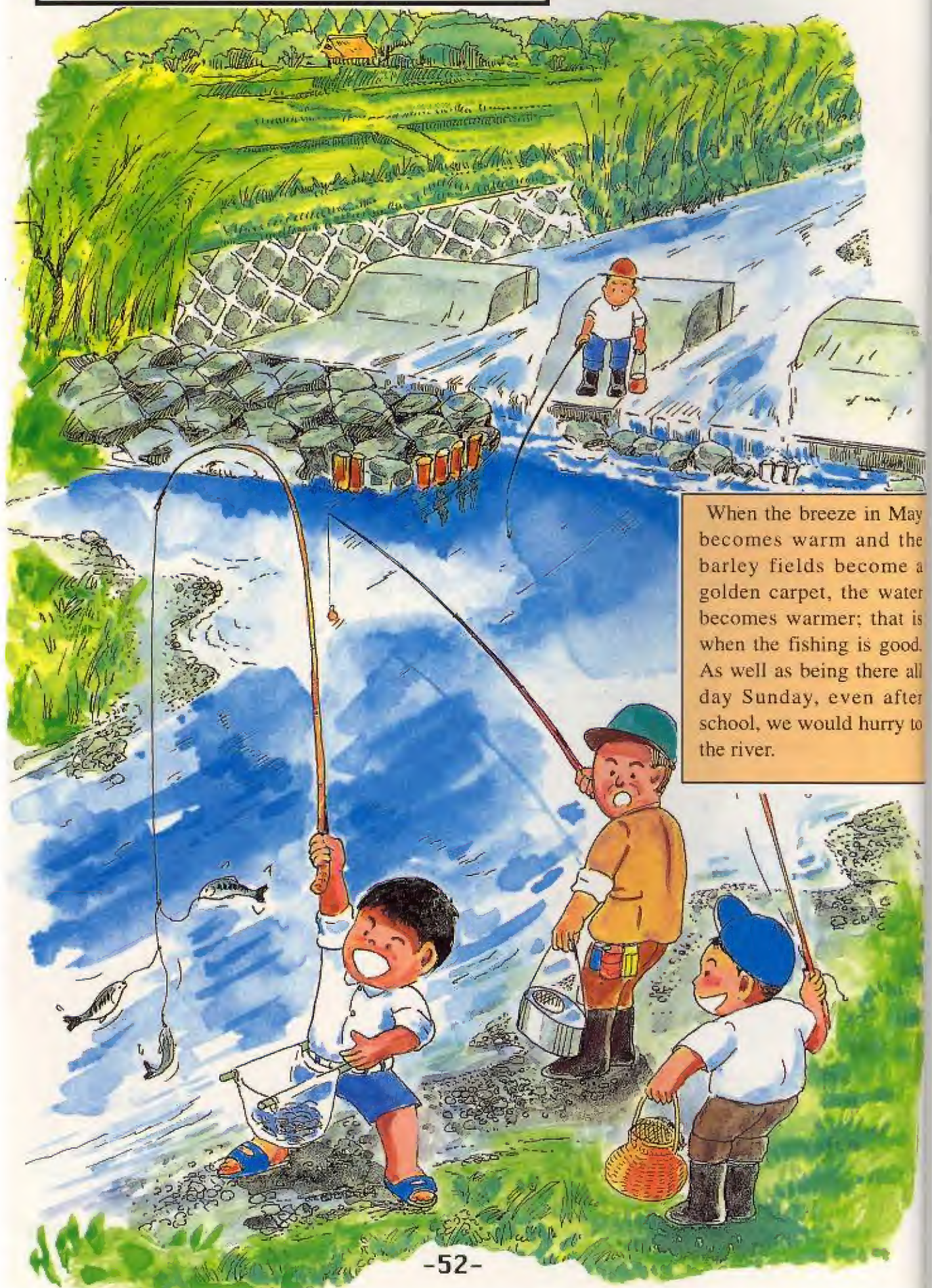
Taking off the tire and spokes from a bicycle or hand-drawn cart wheel, you will get what we called the rim. We used to find the rim at the rubbish dump and using a stick of bamboo or wood, we would bowl it along.



We played in various ways; marking out a course to go along, and seeing who could go along it without veering away, speed races, and jostling rims to make someone's rim go astray.

KAWA-SAKANA-TSURI

(River Fishing)



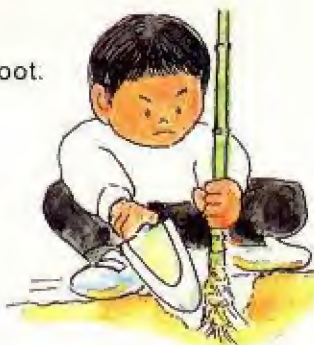
When the breeze in May becomes warm and the barley fields become a golden carpet, the water becomes warmer; that is when the fishing is good. As well as being there all day Sunday, even after school, we would hurry to the river.

Making A Fishing Rod.

Find a bamboo pole that is straight (madake type is best). If we found a good straight pole, even if it was not the fishing season, we would cut it down and put it by.



Dig out the root.



Take off the roots and heat over a fire and polish.



Cut off the branches.

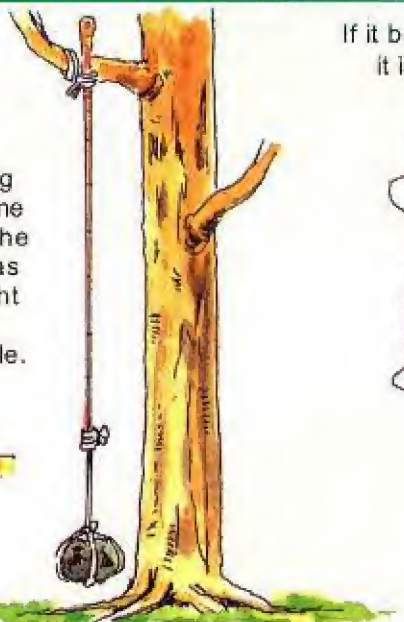


Be careful not to burn it, so do it little by little, and it will become a golden brown.

During this time make the pole as straight as possible.



Heat over a fire until the oil comes out, then polish with straw.

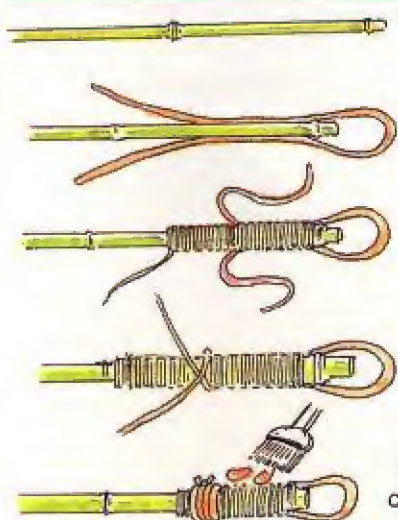


If it still has a bend, tie it up, as in the picture, with a stone as a weight.

If it bends like a whip at the end, it is ready to become a rod.



If it still is not straight, tie it up to a tree, or put it over a fire. This can be done again, even after it is made.



Paint the rod with varnish.

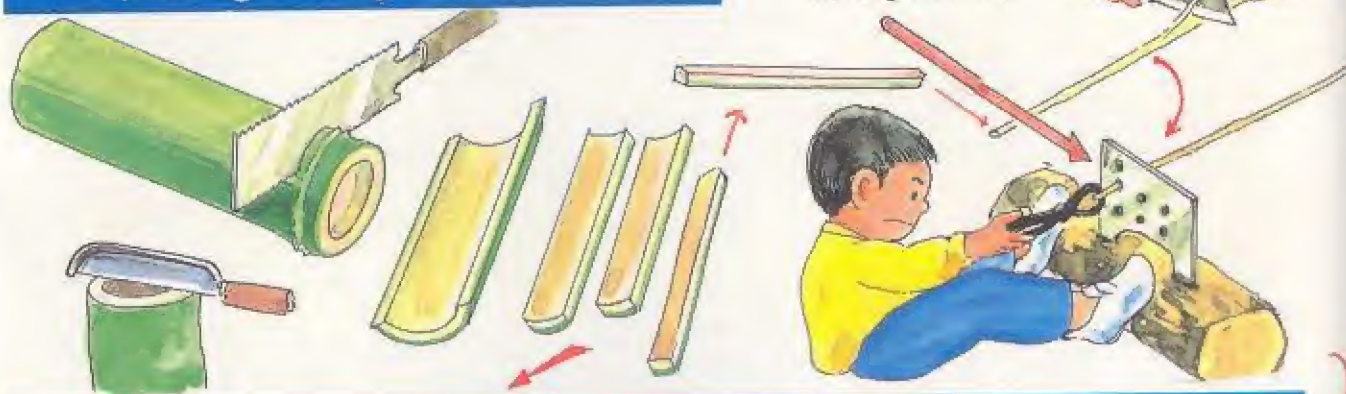
A rod that is long and thin is for fly-catching, and a thicker one is for crucian carp fishing. For other fish I bought a rod at the store.

At the tip of it make a loop to tie the fishing line onto. Tie a piece of string onto the tip, with cotton thread and tie tightly. Paint with varnish.

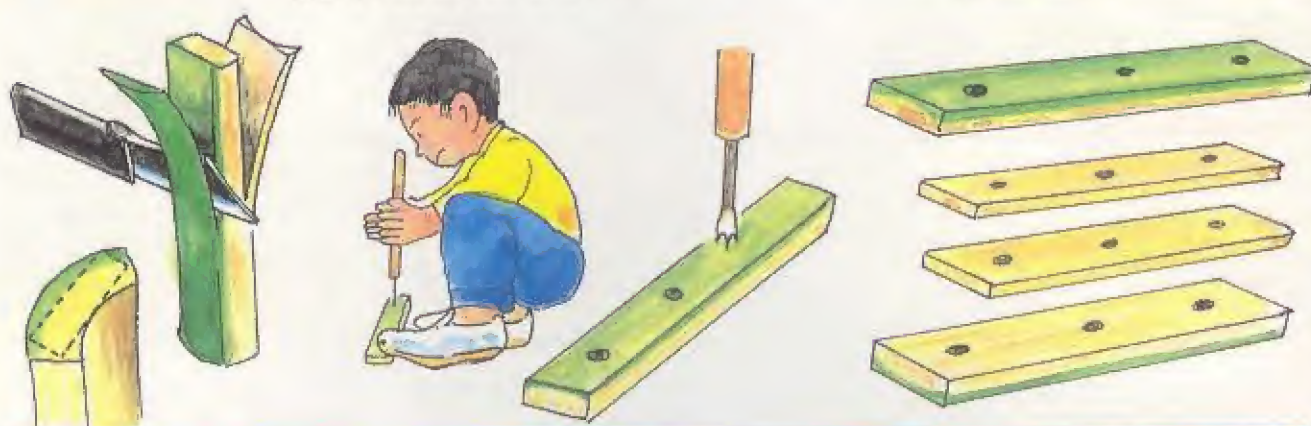
TE-GU-SU-MA-KI-TSU-KU-RI

(Making Fishing Line Holder)

Make bamboo strips (You will find details in the bird cage making section.).



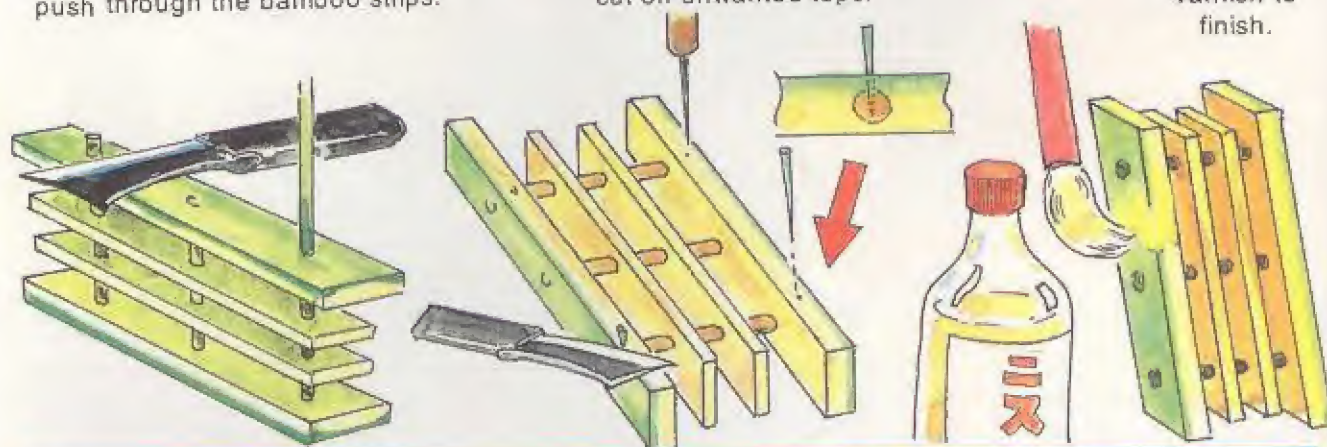
With a mouse-pawed gimlet make holes.



Spacing the bamboo as you want it, push through the bamboo strips.

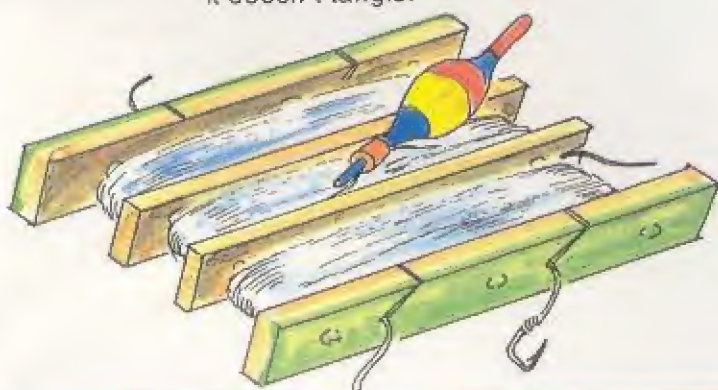
Make **bamboo nails** to fasten, and cut off unwanted tops.

Paint with varnish to finish.



Make slots to take the beginnings and end of line, so it doesn't tangle.

If you wind the different types of line for dace-fishing, crucian carp fishing etc, it is very handy.



HA-E-TSU-RI (Dace Fishing)

This is my formal style of fishing for dace; a feeder at my waist, a fish box in front, a Japanese style towel around my neck which was the substitute for bandage in an emergency, a straw hat when sunbeams were strong, and sandals.



The equipment was only a fish line with three or four hooks for dace; no float and no weights. Baits, later mentioned, were usually provided at the river.

E-MO-NO-I-RE (Fish Bag)



This was made of bleached cotton or a used Japanese towel.



It was hung on the belt.

When the current was fast, I threw the line up to the upper stream as far as possible and let it wander down through the current as far as the length of the line would allow.



I pulled it up when a dace was hooked. When there was no response, I repeated it again. I confirmed sometimes whether a bait was OK or not.

In good conditions, usually in the evening, I got forty to fifty dace within two hours. Notice that I had my own secret method.



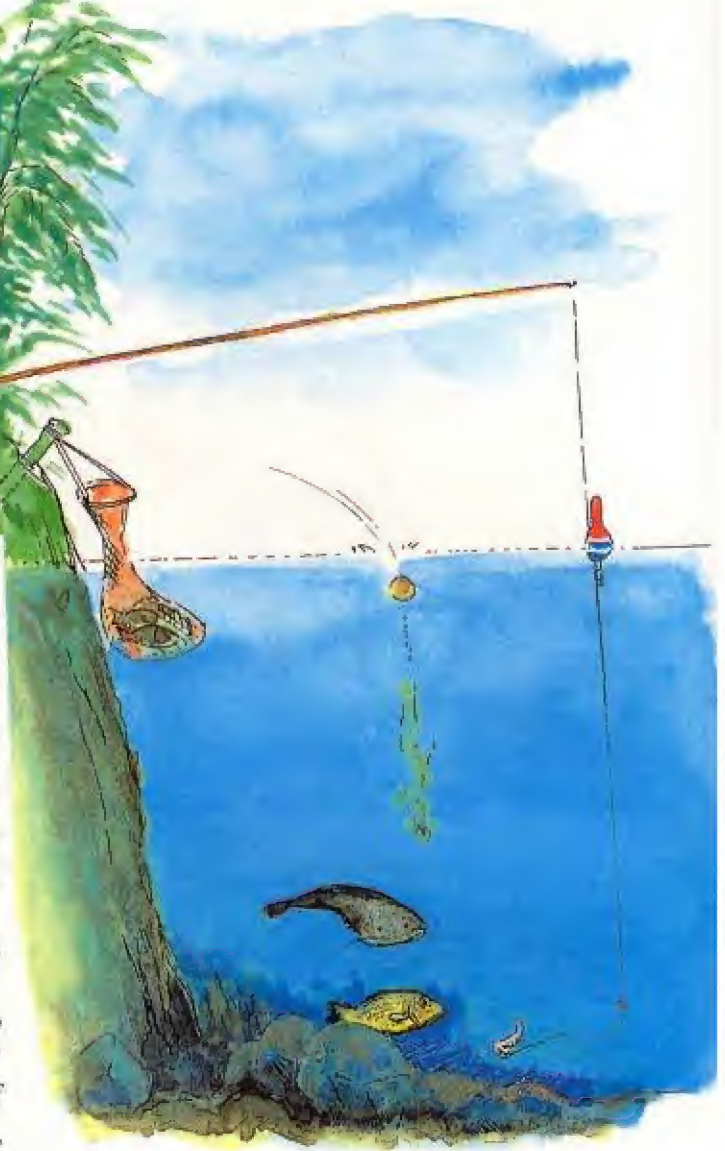
FU-NA-TSU-RI (Fishing Of Crucian)



I didn't like to fish the crucian carp, because it's necessary to be patient with the fishing and to be quiet. You had to be still and use caution with movement of the float. In fishing for crucian carp, you could sometimes catch carp, but sometimes nothing at all. In dace fishing it was impossible not to catch any dace. But after a heavy rain, you were generally unable to do dace fishing and so you had to go to fish crucian carp.

Though I went crucian carp fishing, I often caught catfish, or something like that.

The bait was earthworm. When I had no response at all, I threw a "**bakudan** (bomb)" which was a kind of paste consisting of "MISO(bean paste)", boiled sweet potatoes, and rice bran to make **luring bait**.



HA-E-TSURI-YOH-ESA-I-RE (Bait Box For Dace Fishing)

I used bamboo.



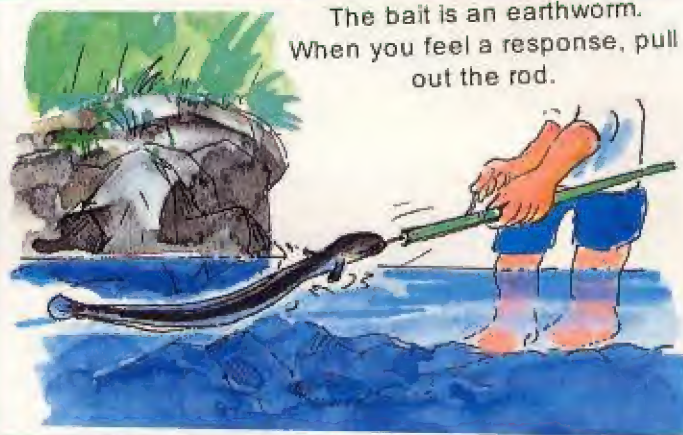
Hang it on your waist band.

U-NA-GI-TSU-RI (Fishing Of Eels)

Make the equipment, as seen in the picture, and insert it in a crack between two rocks.



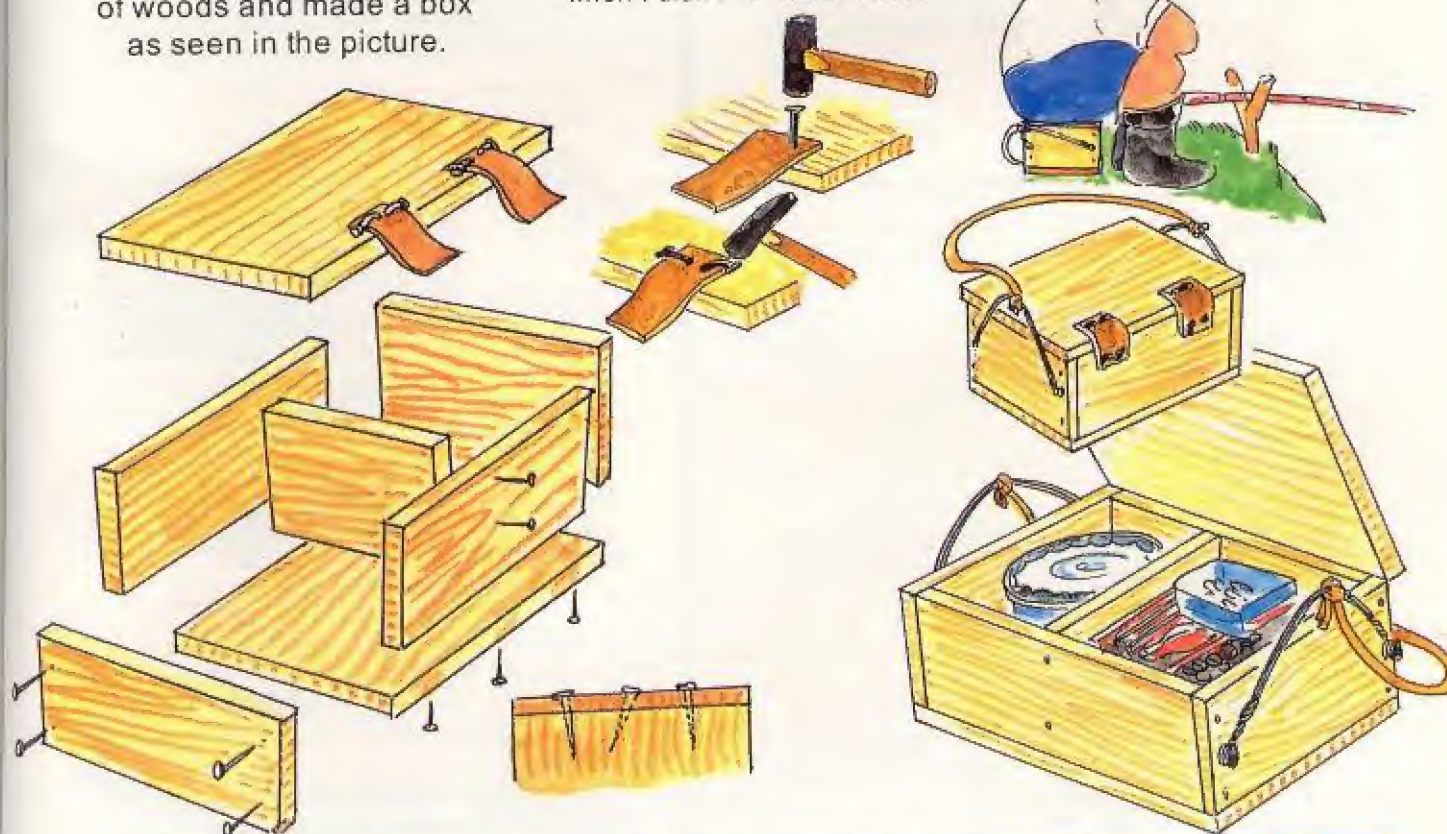
The bait is an earthworm.
When you feel a response, pull out the rod.



FU-NA-TSU-RI-YOH KOSHI-KA-KE AND DOH-GU-BAKO (A Chair Or Box Which Contains The Equipments For Crusian Fishing)

I gathered some pieces of woods and made a box as seen in the picture.

I used an old leather belt for hinges when I didn't have real ones.



TSURI-ESA (The Baits For Fishing)



"SE-MUSHI"--This is the larva of the firefly which has its nest on stones in streams. The larva is a favorite for dace.



"AZAMI-MUSHI"--This is a white parasitic worm of thistle flower. You can easily find it in the dead flower. (For dace)



"DONGURI-MUSHI"--
This is also a white worm which is born in an acorn on the ground.



"FUTSU-MUSHI"

This is a small insect which makes a white, foamy nest in the leaf of mugwort. (For dace)



"ITO-MIMIZU"

This is a small earthworm which lives in a spring issuing from rocks in a mountain stream.



"SHIMA-MIMIZU

(Branding)"--This is the most popular one for crucian, river shrimp or something like that. They live in the earth of the farm, a garbage pit, or around a cattle cottage. (For dace)

* I prepared **boiled rice** or **flies** as a substitute of the baits mentioned above, in the case where the baits are not provided in dace fishing.

THE RIVER FISH WHICH YOU CAN EASILY FISH



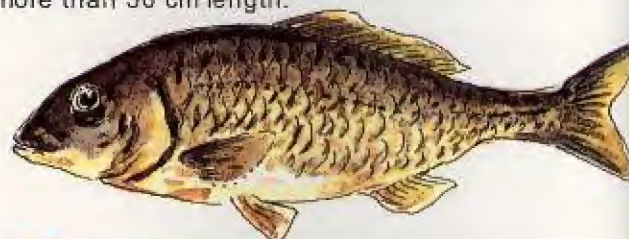
HA-E or HA-YA (A Dace) 5-15 cm length
You can fish large ones.



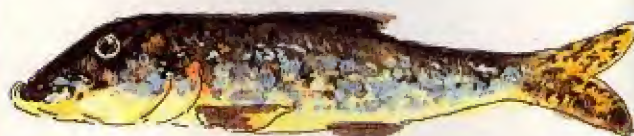
YA-MA-SO or O-I-KA-WA (A Kind Of Carp, Zacco Platypas)



FU-NA (Crusian)--The largest ones are more than 30 cm length.



KO-I (Carp)-- I have no memory of fishing them, but I captured them by an instrument named **"HOKO-TSUKI"** which I mention later.



KA-MA-TSU-KA--They live on the sand at the bottom of the river and are 10-15 cm in length. I enjoyed fishing them from the bridge by dropping a hook with bait in front of them.

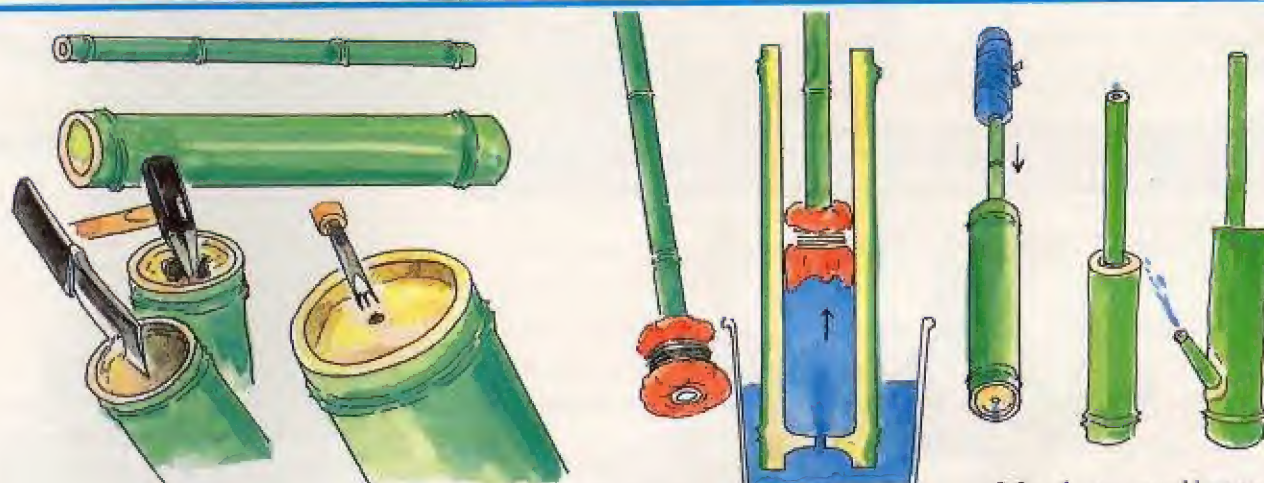


SU-BO-GU-CHI means pursed lips. 10 cm length at the largest. It is difficult to fish them. How to fish them is **"OKE-TSUKI"** which is mentioned later.

The others **NA-MA-ZU** (Catfish), **U-NA-GI** (Eels), **GYU-GYU, DO-N-KO** etc.

MIZU-TEPPOU

(Water Pistol)



Attach rubber or a piece of cloth on the end of bamboo.

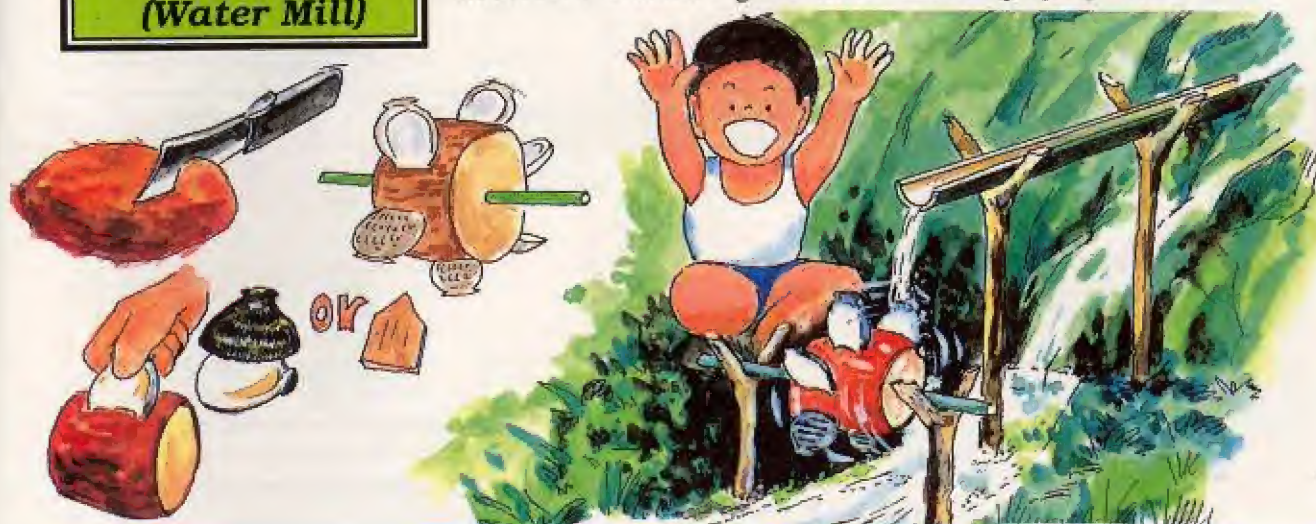
The end should be almost as big as the inner diameter of the bamboo to give a tight fit.

Much complicated ones with a valve have been prepared but I can not remember them.

SUI-SHA

(Water Mill)

A SUI-SHA or a water mill was made of a chopped potato and several shells of clams. I won a prize when I wrote a composition about how to make a good water mill and playing with it.



SABOTEN AND BONSAI-GOKKO

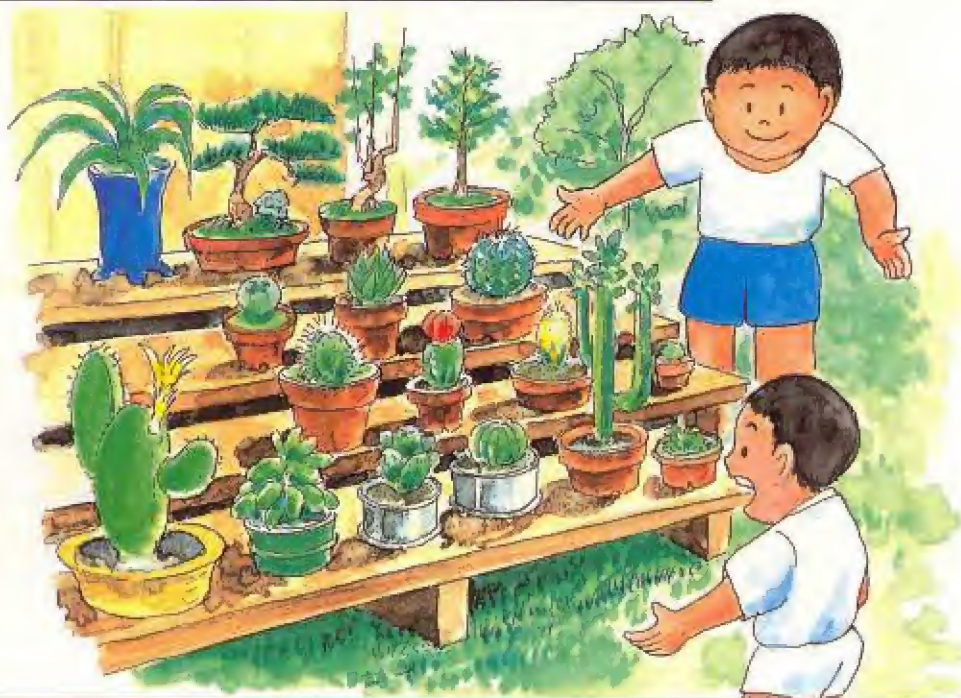
(Cactuses And Bonsai Trees)

When I was an elementary schoolboy, growing cactuses and bonsai trees became a boom amongst some children.

I was one of them.

I took a look around from house to house.

These excursions gave me chances to broaden my assortment of cactuses by means of receiving new ones. I devoted myself to collecting a number of unusual cactuses.



UE-KI-BACHI-TSUKURI (How To Make A Pot)

A used can



A bamboo



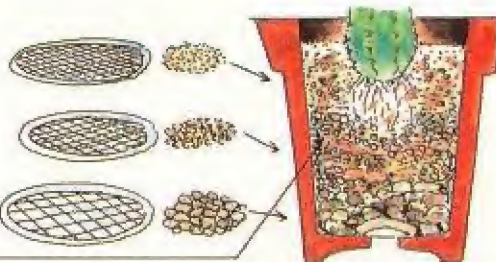
Make a couple of holes on the bottom .

U-E-TSU-KE (How To Plant A Cactus)

Crumble leaves into small pieces.
Mix them with the soil



Good drainage is a key to success in planting.



SABO-TEN-NO-TSU-GI-KI (How To Graft A Cactus)



Dry the section of a slashed cactus.
Attach it to another kind of cactus
with rice plant straw.



I always made great efforts to graft cactuses. That's why I was very glad at a unique kind after being successful.

TAKE-SEI-ISHOKU-GO-TE (Bamboo Shovel)

A rather big bamboo with a joint is cut as illustrated in the picture.



Two shovels can be made from one piece of bamboo.



Give them the finishing touches using a sharp hatchet.



BON-SAI- GO-KKO (Play To Make Bonsai Tree)

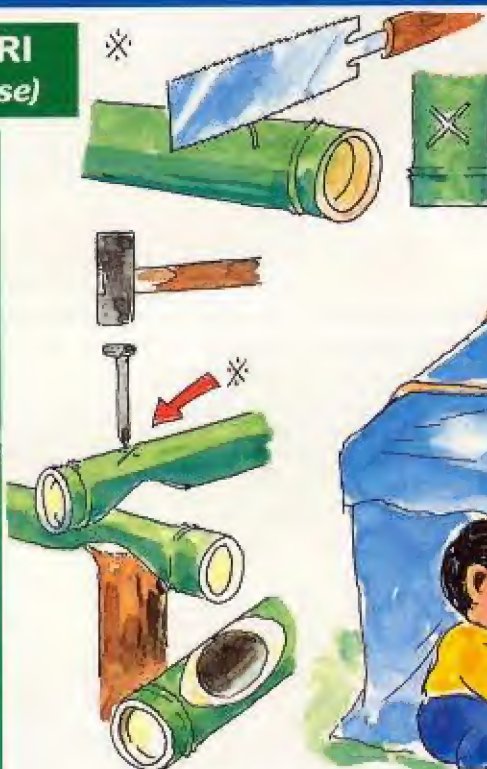


Search for a tree suitable for BONSAI in the mountain. Put it in a pot and prune it with wires to make it form into a beautiful Bonsai. It was pleasant to make a miniature garden in the pot by placing float stones, a small pine, and mosses. Thinking back, it was funny to hear children of elementary school age talking to each other using technical terms, "My pine tree is good for----" or "No, my maple tree is better because----," etc. I also used to plant Rhoeo Japonica too, by clipping dust away from leaves carefully with a brush. I paid delicate attention to protecting them against damage on the leaves and competed with my friends believing my own Bonsai was the best one.

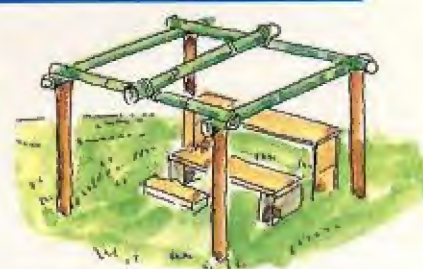
ON-SHITSU-ZUKU-RI (Building A Green House)



Cactuses cannot survive winter frost. That's why a green house should be built before the frost lies. Set up four poles of cedars in your garden.



The framework is made of bamboo. Cover it with a used plastic sheet. Lay extra straw on it on a very cold day.



Do not forget to ventilate the green house during the daytime.

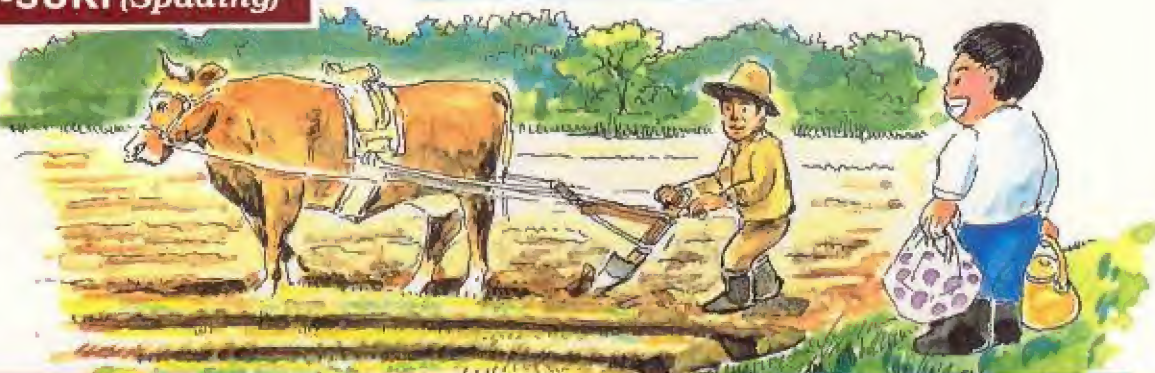
TA-U-E-JUN-BI (Preparation For Rice Planting)

We commonly cropped rice and wheat alternately each year. The ridges needed for wheat planting should be destroyed after the harvest and the fields should be flattened again for the next rice planting.

TAN-BO-SUKI (Spading)

We used to spade the ground by means of oxen.

Later these beasts were replaced by cultivators.

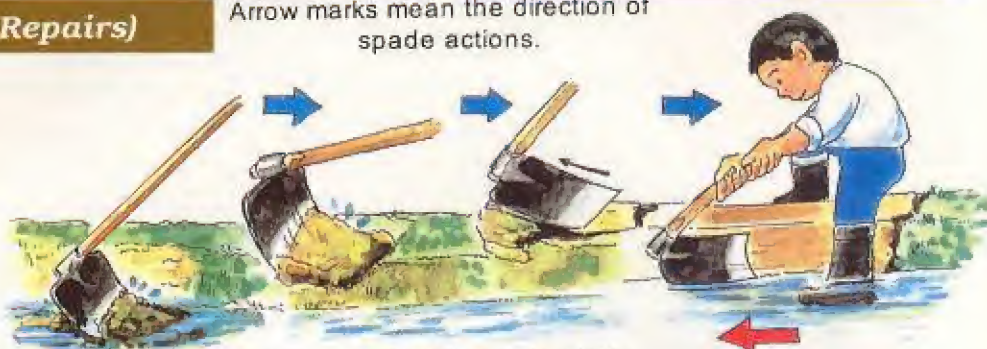


A-ZE-NU-RI (Path Repairs)

Arrow marks mean the direction of spade actions.

In order to keep the water in the fields from running away, you should first pack down the soil of AZE (raised path between the fields).

Scoop soil with a spade and put on the paths and then press down with the back side of the spade.



The action was done going forwards.

KA-KI-NA-RA-SHI (Leveling The Fields)

"KAKINARASHI" is the work to make the soil of the fields muddy with water and to flatten the fields for the smooth rice planting. Lumps in the soil are crushed and the fertilizer is added to the fields.

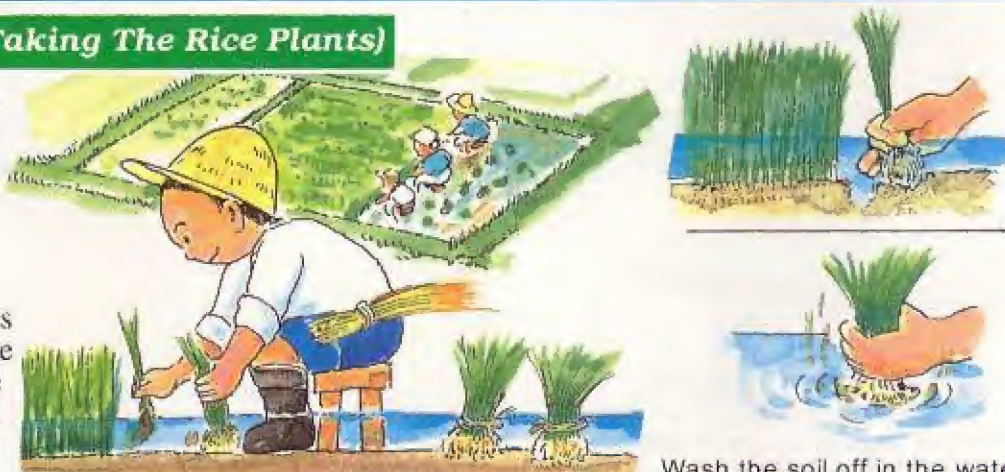
Soybeans are often planted on the paths to fulfill the reinforcement of the paths as well as being a profitable by-product.



NA-E-TO-RI (Taking The Rice Plants)

The fields enjoying their ample quantity of water and their good quality of soil are selected for nurseries.

Sitting in the comfortable nurseries for several weeks, the young rice plants are waiting to be moved into the fields.



You should take several well-grown rice plants very carefully at a time, without breaking the stalks off.

Wash the soil off in the water and bind a number of the plants with straws.

Young rice plants are carried from nurseries.

Throw young rice plants at certain intervals estimating the amount.

TA-U-E (Rice Planting)

On a longed for fine day during the rainy season, the rice planting begins at the break of dawn. The paddies here and there turn into green in a remarkably short time.



U-E-KA-TA (How To Plant Young Rice Plants)

Hold a few rice plants with three fingers as illustrated (or the thumb, the index finger and the middle finger) protecting the stems. Make a hole with those fingers and leave the plants there behind.



Set a rope with red marks on it above the fields, which indicate the position for the rice

TA-U-E-ZU-NA (Rice Planting Rope) and TA-U-E TAKE (Rice Planting Bamboo)



The rice planting rope and the rice planting bamboo help you plant rice plants at equal intervals. Plant them along the bamboo, right next to the marks.

These plants indicate the positions for each following rice plant. One person takes charge of four or five lines, planting backwards keeping your back bent during the work. It becomes painful later on.

TA-NO-KU-SA-TO-RI (Weeding)

Weeding is the next work after the rice planting. Weeds should be removed by farm machines called "**GANZUME**" before they grow. Other weeds like barn yard grasses should be removed by hands. When weeding you need to cover your face fully with a towel because the weeds are very unfriendly to your skin. (I don't think we used a weed killer)

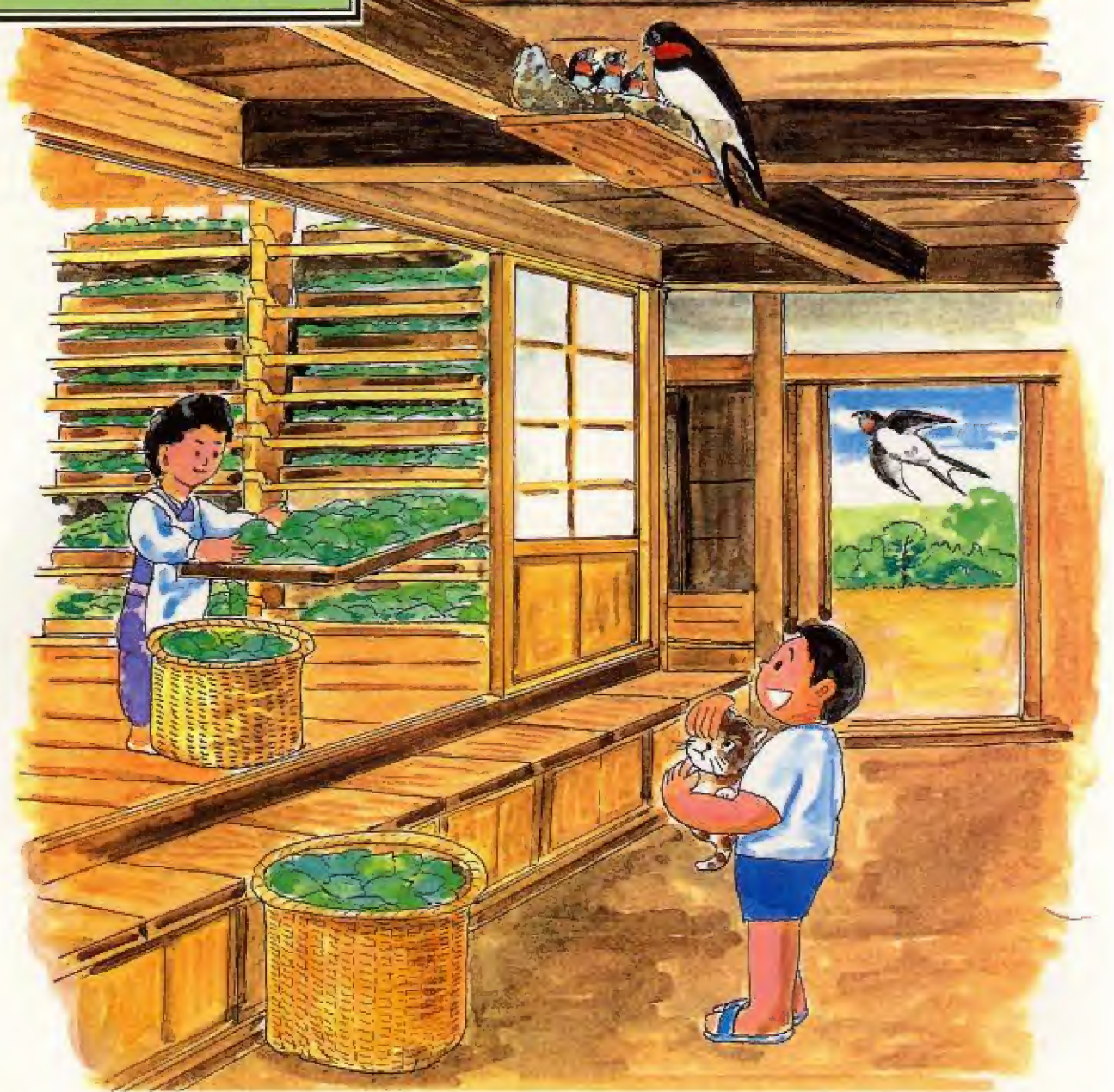


MI-ZU-NO-KAN-RI (Controlling The Water)

Consecutive dry days involve various extra efforts at the water supply.

I remember my family taking pains to pump from rivers or to drain water from the mountain through all the night.

TSU-BA-ME (Swallows)



The annual arrival of swallows tells us the rice-planting reason is here again. I wonder whether those swallows are the very ones that left the nest here last year?

A pair of swallows seems to decide on nesting in our home this year. These swallows begin to reconstruct the used nest from the year before. After the hard work on the nest, the mother swallow lays eggs and concentrates on setting on them for several days straight except for catching food outside. Once the eggs are hatched, the parents are busy with taking turns bringing their children food from outside. For this reason the front door should be left a little bit open all the day just enough for a swallow to go through the opening.

They stay with our family from late May or early June till the middle of September.

The day of leaving the nest has come. The parents help their children fly. Some of them are brave enough to leave alone and others are a little too cowardly to do so. It takes them several days to fly all by themselves.

Checking the number of her family, the mother swallow gives her farewell sign to us as though saying " See you next year again." They circle for a couple of times above our home and fly south.

OH-MI-ZU (Floods)

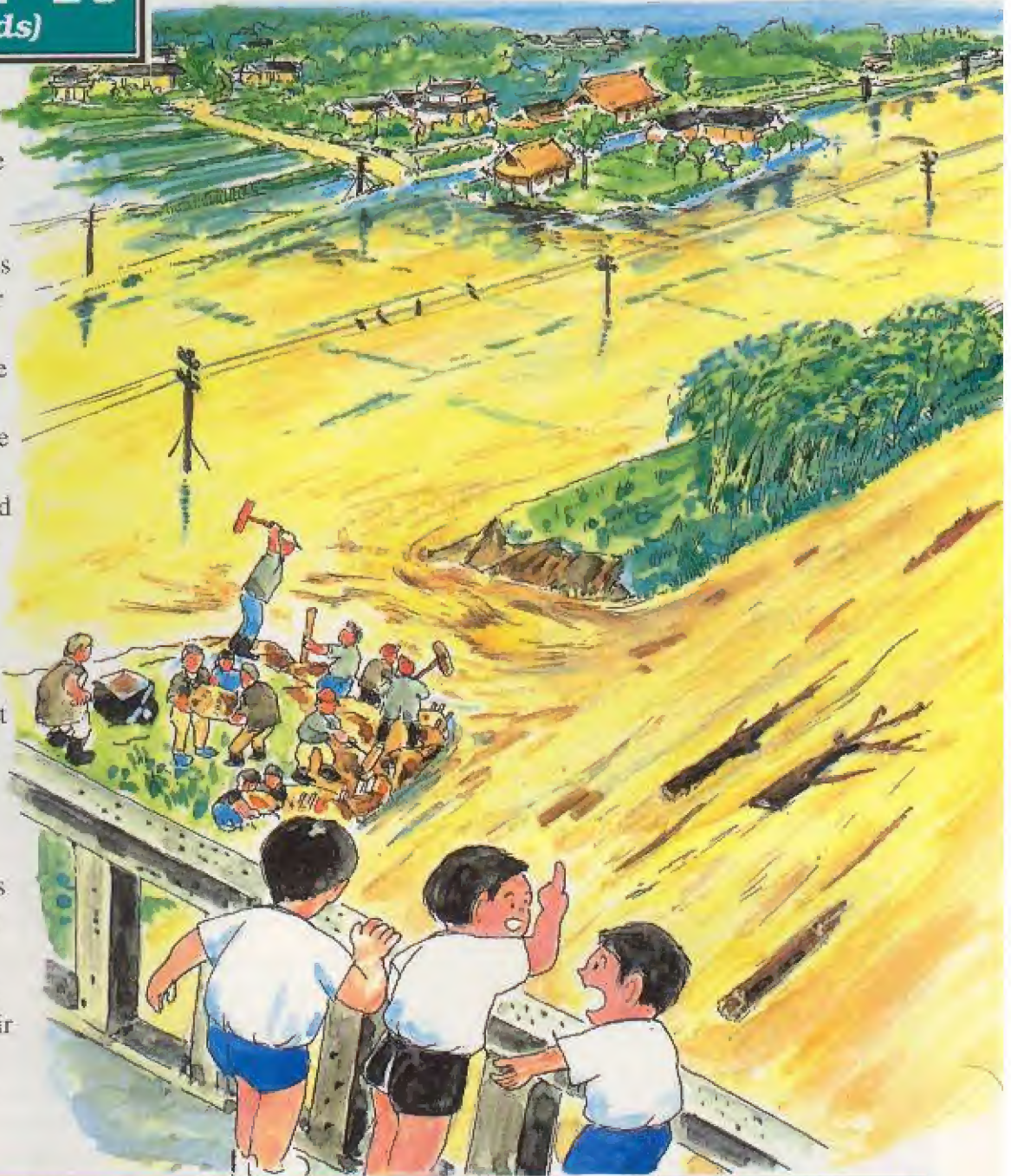
Every year floods hit our village during the rainy season.

Sometimes I saw the rice fields and houses under the water.

The break of the dikes damaged almost all the rice plants.

Once a big flood recorded deaths, when I was an elementary schoolboy.

Floods did us harm on different levels each year. We were a little too young to understand the occasional works of prevention by the grownups. Even though we were used to their work, we were curious about it.



AGARI-FUNA-TORI (Catching Dried-up Crucian Carp)

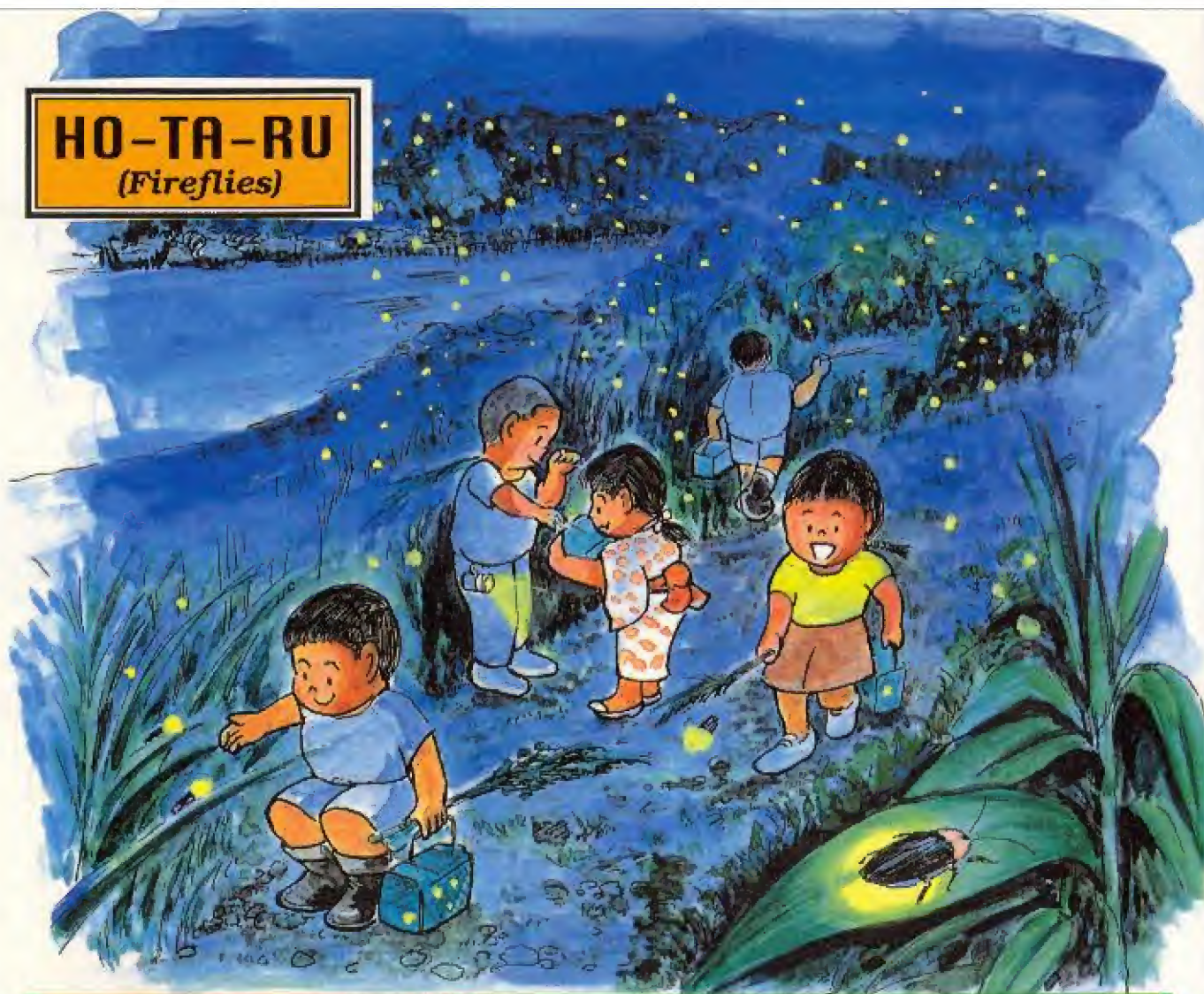


While feeling sorry for the people who suffered from a lot of damage, I could not help admitting the pleasure of fishing after the flood.

The fishes, such as crucian carp or carp, which usually lined in the drains next to the rice fields moved into the fields. The moving dorsal of the fishes here and there gave us hints about where they hid themselves. Everyone was proud of this bucketful of fishes.

I wonder now if I was the only one that waited expectantly for the floods.

HO-TA-RU (Fireflies)



"Come here, fireflies,
water there tastes bad.
Come here, fireflies,
water here tastes good."

This song, bamboo leaves, and a small basket were indispensable for catching fireflies.

In the evenings of the early summer, from our porch, I saw one child after another get together on their way to the bank of the river nearby.

"Wait! I am going too," said I and made quick preparations for this exciting adventure. I heard my mother say, "Don't come home too late," behind me.

The bank of the river was alight with the lights of many fireflies at certain intervals. Where the fireflies felt approached by us, they were too frightened to shine. What should we do? A piece of advice. Hold your breath, and you see them start to shine again. At this moment, you should catch them. Small fireflies were freed. We made it a rule to catch only several fireflies at the most. We felt the enjoyment more on the thrilling adventure and the world of fantasy full of beautiful fireflies than on catching them. We fed the caught fireflies cucumbers.

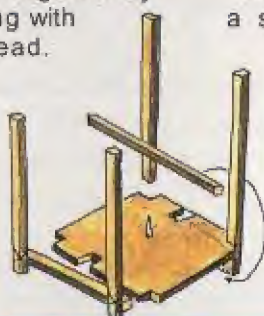
MA-WA-RI-TOH-ROH

(Revolving Shadow Lantern)

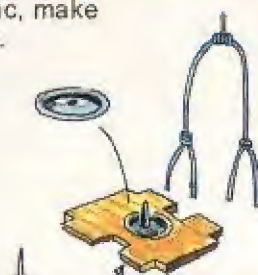


Get several square rods ready. As in the picture, make the bottom board to match the rods.

Put together by tying with thread.

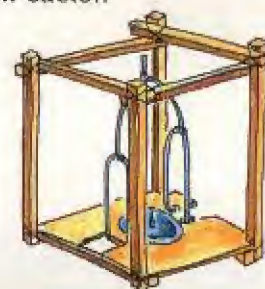


Using zinc, make a saucer.

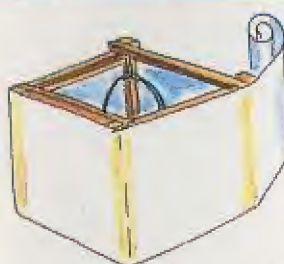


Nail for holding the candle.

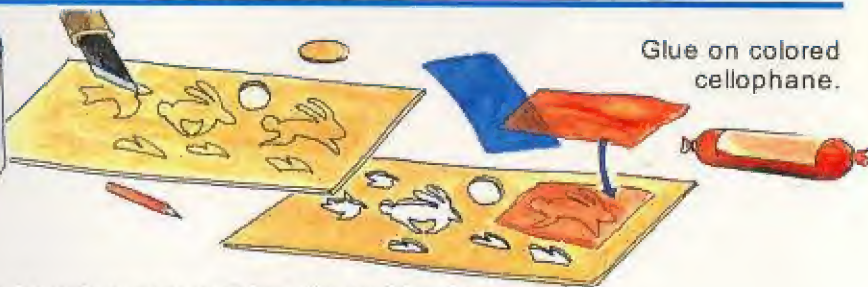
With wire make a holder for the shadow caster.



Glue on "shohji" paper (opaque paper).

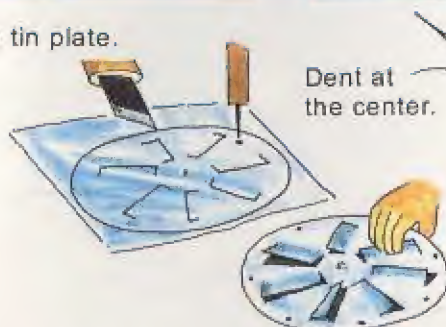


Glue on colored cellophane.



Draw pictures on cardboard (Aluminium board is best in today) and cut them out.

A thin tin plate.



Dent at the center.

Make the cardboard into a cylinder and sew it onto the revolving wings plate. It is best to paint the outside of the cylinder black.



The lantern will revolve slowly over the lighted candle.

Make wings for revolving, having them all going in the same direction and lift them all slightly. **Be careful of your candle size, to make sure the lantern doesn't burn.**

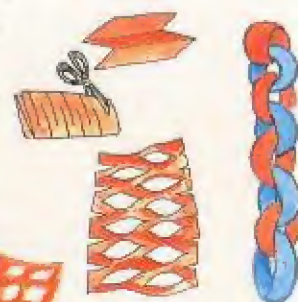
TA-NA-BA-TA

(The Weaver Star Festival)

Cut the bamboo branch.



Tear the hemp palm leaves into strips.

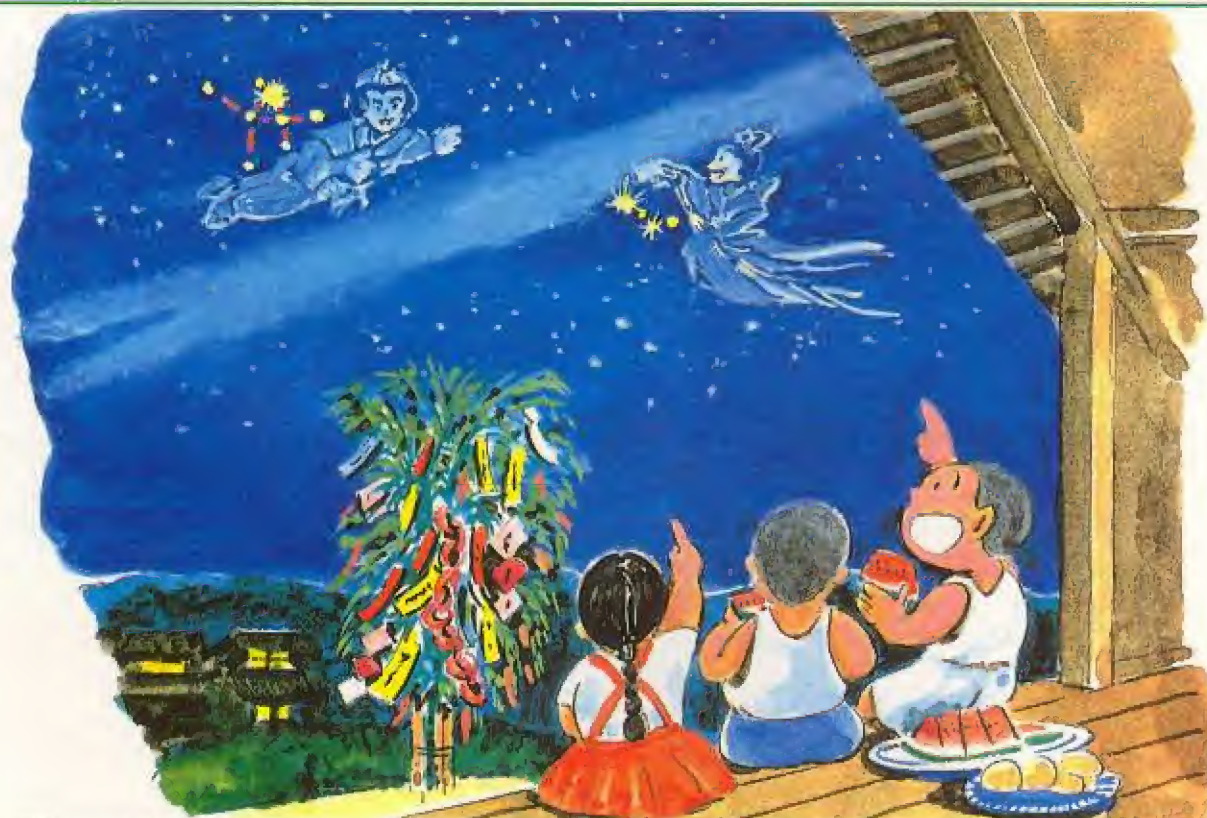


Tie on **ORI-GAMI** (folded papers) and paper crafts too.

Write many wishes on the colored papers, which makes you also **practice calligraphy**. We believed that wishes would only be fulfilled if we used fresh dew to dilute ink in the ink slab.



Standing the bamboo branch decorated with various wishes in the garden, we looked at **the Milky Way** and thought of the romance between **the Weaver Star (Vega)** and **the Cowherd Star (Altair)** who can meet only once a year.



I'll never forget how **beautiful the starry sky** in my home town was. The stars seemed so close that we could almost touch them.

NATSU-YASUMI (The Summer Vacation)

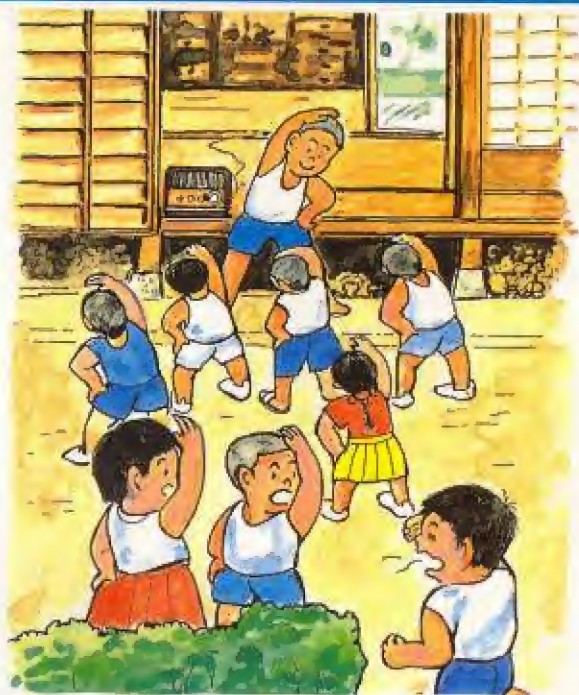


A couple days before the summer vacations started, students from each district got together at school to discuss where to swim at, who was going to supervise the children during the swimming, where to do physical exercises with the radio, and some other rules for the summer vacation.

Teachers didn't interfere in those discussions. **Everybody seemed to be aware of observing the rules firmly we made ourselves.** That's why the discussions were great concerns to us every year.

Here comes the summer vacation for more than a month. We were beside ourselves with joy.

RADIO-TAI-SO (Physical Exercises On The Radio)



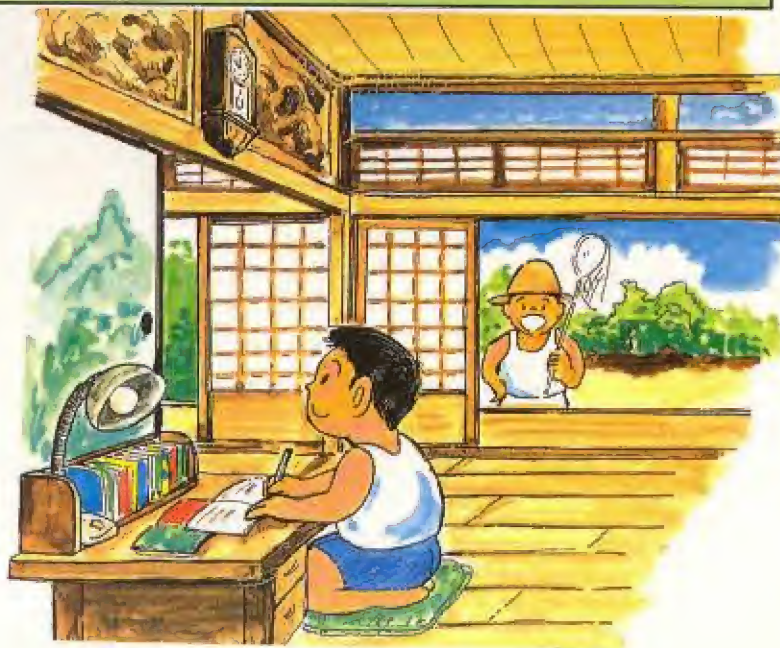
Among other pleasant pastimes during the summer vacation we shouldn't forget the daily routine of the physical exercises on the radio at 6:30 sharp at a certain place chosen each year. The places differed greatly, some of which were as far as more than 1 km from my home. The older students checked attendance. This attendance rate was reported to the teacher after the vacation and influenced the grade for physical education. My home was chosen as the place only once throughout six years. I took great advantage of the 30-minutes-larger-sleep just before the exercises on the radio started. Then I jumped out of bed and joined the exercises immediately. That was easy!

NAGAKATTA-(GOZEN-JU-JI)-MADE (Difficult to Stay At Home Till 10 O'clock In The Morning)

As the rule during the summer vacation, we were not allowed to go out before 10 a.m. Should you be witnessed somewhere before 10 a.m., you could be called on the carpet at school on certain days of the summer.

Fidgeting and watching the clock, I did my homework first before 10 a.m. Sometimes I cheated with the clock which I had set a little bit ahead.

Finally at 10 o'clock I heard the first five chimes inside and the other five outside. But I had finished my homework thoroughly before the summer vacation came to an end.



SE-MI-TO-RI (Catching Cicadas)

Cicadas begin to sing hard early in the summer mornings.

CHI-SEMI (MINMIN-ZEMI) cry first and they are followed by **AKANCHO (ABURA-ZEMI)**,

WASHIWASHI(KUMA-ZEMI), **TSUKUNSHO (TSUKU-TSUKU-HOHSHI)** in this order from mid July to mid September.

I found the short life of a cicada a pity when I heard one lives for as long as several years under the ground, but uses up all his life to sing above the ground in such a short time as about one week by contrast. But I still could not resist the pleasure in catching those insects.

SE-MI-NO-NU-KE-GA-RA (Cast-Off Shells)

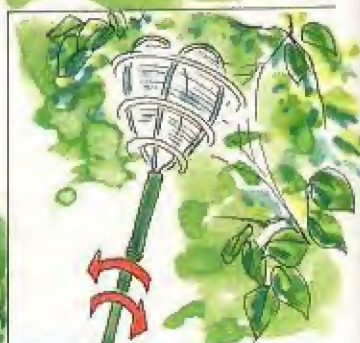
Cicadas repeat casting of their shells several times. Those cast-off shells were as precious as valuables for me.



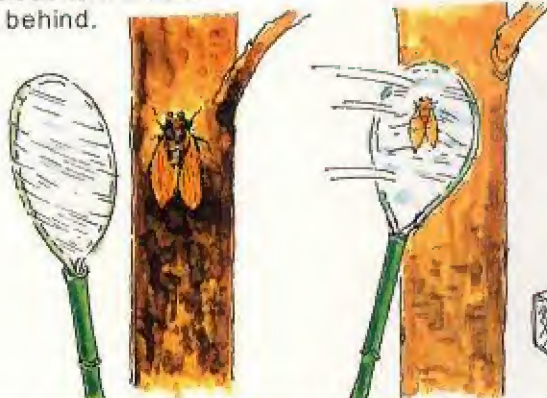
Make a ring of a bamboo strip and put both ends into another piece of bamboo. Attach a spiders web to it.



Look for a sticky spiders web in the shadow.



Set the net close to a cicada from behind.



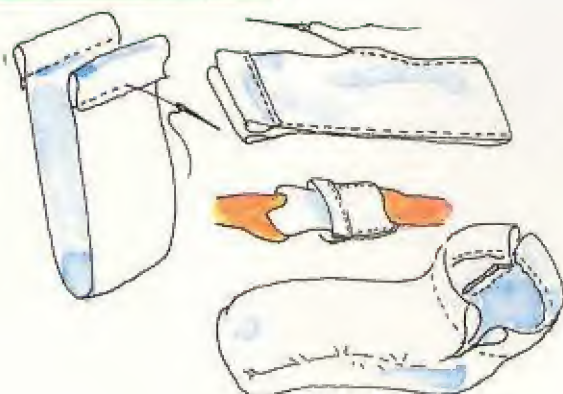
This method is good to catch a cicada without damaging it because it prevents it from struggling.

The caught cicada gets a formalin injection and becomes a specimen.

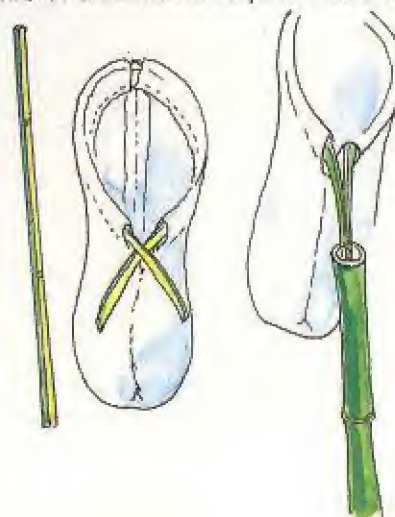


TA-MO-TSUKU-RI (Making A Scoop Net)

A piece of bleached cloth or a vinyl bag is used to make a net.

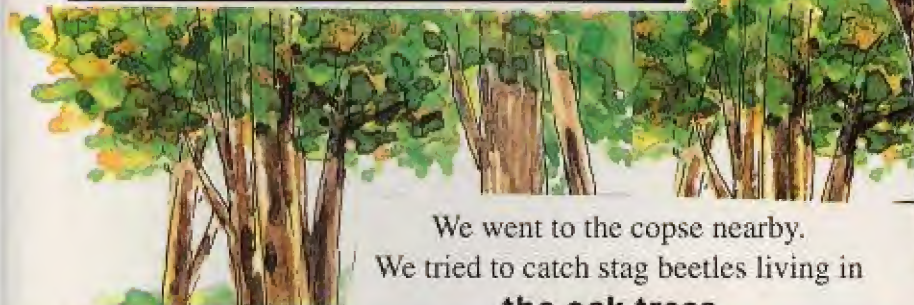


Use a wire or a bamboo strip to make a ring.



KUWAGATA-TORI

(Catching Stag Beetles)



We went to the copse nearby.
We tried to catch stag beetles living in
the oak trees.



KAERU-TSURI

(Picking Up A Frog)

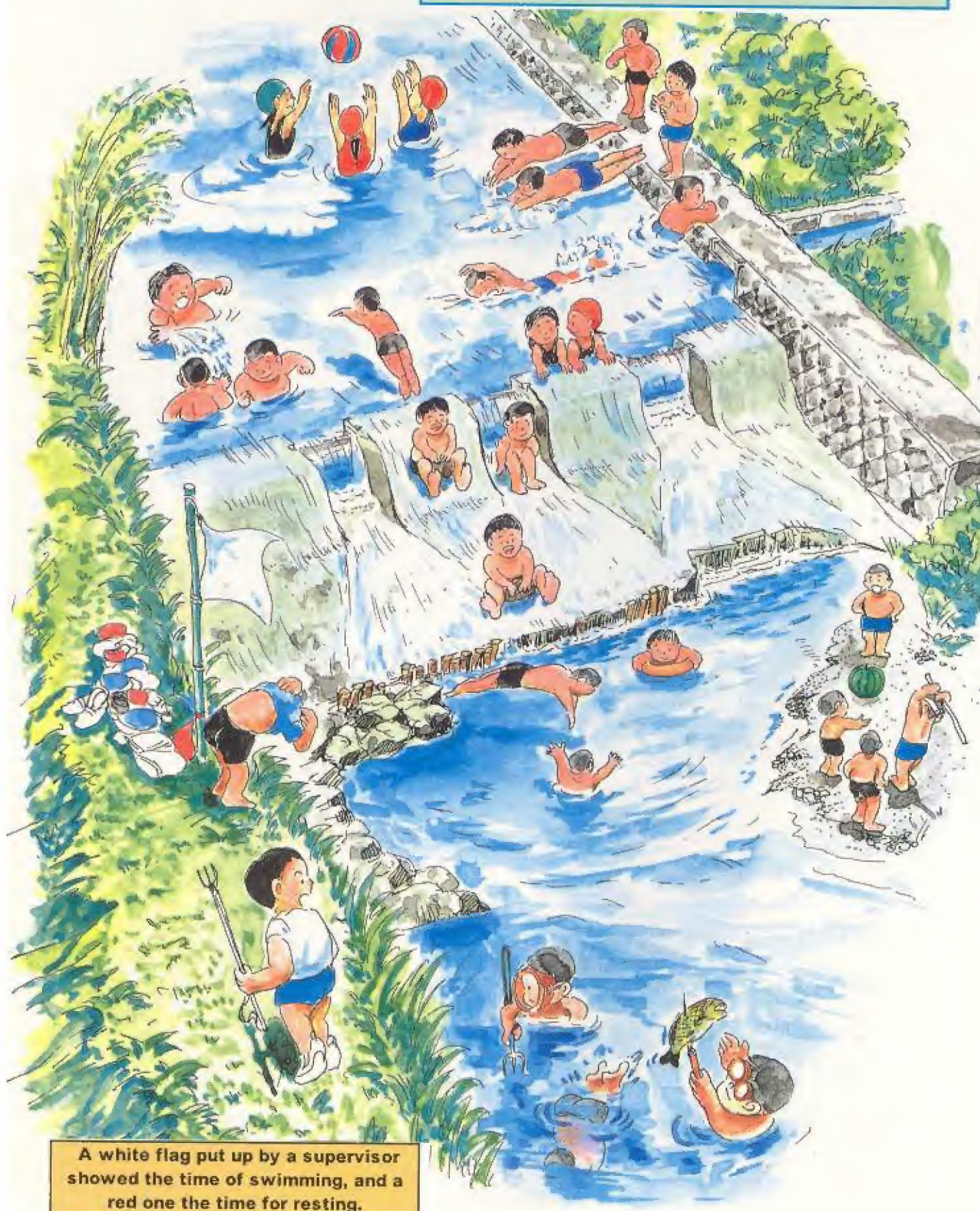
Picking up a frog was a great pleasure. A caught frog must
be freed. The pleasure lay mainly in the thrill of matching
wits with the frog.



KAWA-ASOBI

(Playing In The River)

Different places for swimming were chosen each year. Between 10 a.m. and noon and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. the children were allowed to swim in the river. **We enjoyed swimming almost every day during the summer vacation.**



A white flag put up by a supervisor showed the time of swimming, and a red one the time for resting.

IKADA-ASOBI

(Floating On A Raft)

When it came to the pleasure in the river, nothing was as fascinating as floating on a raft. We were divided into two teams per raft trying to get to the destination faster than the other team on our own raft. We had no chance to take a boat in the sea, but we could derive as much pleasure from rafting as from boating.

We enjoyed rafting not only in the river but also by the dam.



With the permission of our parents, we cut the necessary number of bamboos for our raft. We built it with those bamboos in the river.



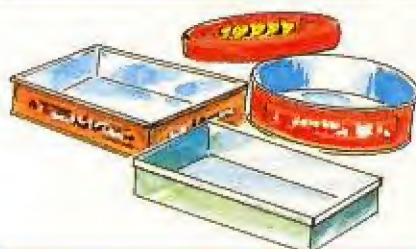
We had to bind the bamboos with ropes.

Dangerous wires or nails were not used.

A rather big stone played the role of **anchor**.

The raft was lifted to the bank of the river after playing.

OKE-TSU-KE (Tub Snare)



Swimming is a small part of playing in the river but **fishing is the main fun of it.**

There were many ways to fish, however I would like to show you one of the ways I usually fished.

To make a trap, first you have to prepare some materials such as **biscuit cans, aluminum lunch boxes**, and the like which will become the vessel in which fish will be trapped.

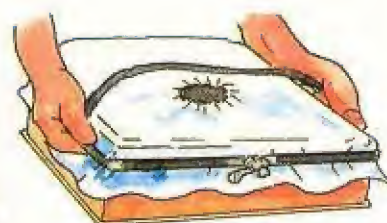
Then, you need to get a piece of cloth larger than the opening of the vessel and cut a hole in the middle of the cloth.



The hole has to be reinforced by sewing thread around the hole so the cloth will not rip.



Make a rubber band with a piece of rubber from a old bicycle tire tube.

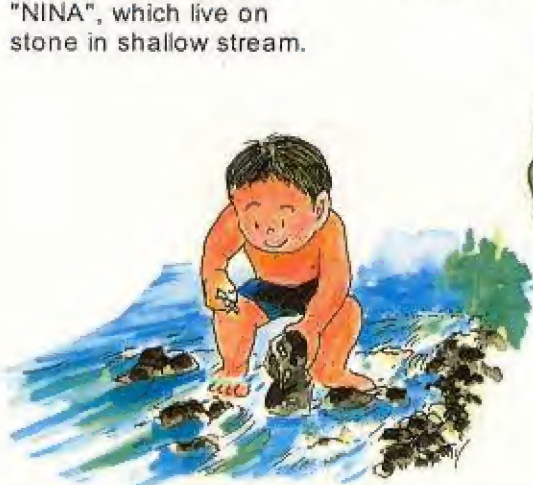


Cover on the vessel with the cloth and wind the rubber around the edge so that the cloth spread tightly.

MAKING BAITS

Baits are shells, called "NINA", which live on stone in shallow stream.

"NINA" is a kind of black spiral-shaped river shell, 2-3 cm length which we ate by boiling with "MISO" (fermented soybeans).



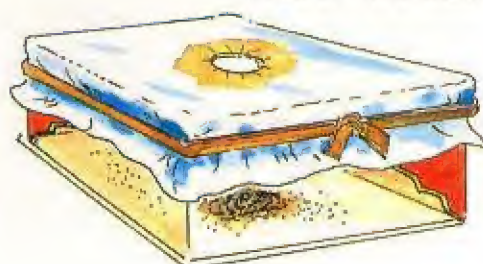
Mix the crushed fragments with "MISO" flavoring.

Crush them by beating with a stone.

Then, put some baits into the vessel, scrubbing the juicy fragments around the hole.

The baits should be of a small quantity at a time.

Then we are ready to go after the preparation as seen in *1 of next page.



Press the hole with your fingers and the water should be gradually entering into the vessel through the cloth.

Further press the hole lest juicy baits escape from the vessel and go to the place where the snare should be set.



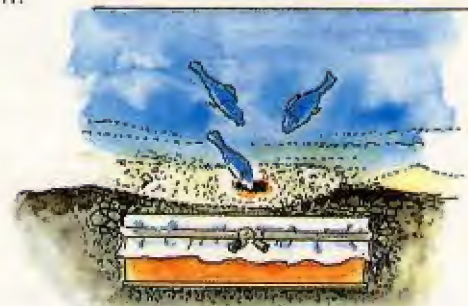
(*1) Dig a hole at the bottom of the river where the vessel should be placed.



As you need place the vessel at **one diving of one or two minutes**, make deep breathing and go.

Bury it in the bottom fully except for the hole, keeping pressing the hole with your fingers lest the juicy baits leaks out and fishes gather too early.

Leave the snare quietly after finishing the action.



Fishes gather after a while.

Go, dive again, go near quietly, and pull up after one hour.

Press the hole with your hand and dig out the vessel.

Go up to the bank while keeping the hole closed with your fingers.



Unfasten the rubber belt and put the captured fishes into a **fish preserve** which is prepared.



Then repeat the same procedure, changing the place. Captured fishes were "SUBOGUCHI" or "HAYA (Dace)."

"OKETSUKE (Tub Snare) was a play between swimming. The time of thirty minutes or one hour between set-up and pulling up the snare was the time of swimming race, diving race, play at war in the water, play of bringing down a pole (see the figure of water playing) and etc.

By evening, we could catch about thirty or forty fishes by several time trappings. When ruled playing time in the water was over, fishes saved in **the fish preserve** were brought back home.

We **cooked** in various ways. For example we made **"NITSUKE"** by cooking the fish with soy sauce, **"TENPURA"** by deep frying the fish, **"NANBANZUKE"** by boiling with cayenne to eat.

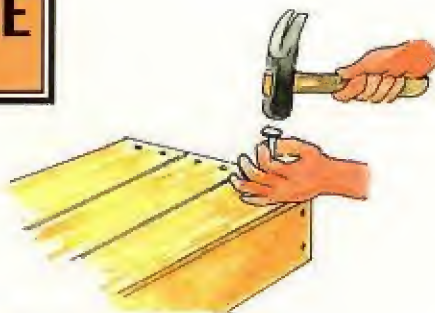
To come to think it now, those foods were **very healthy**, which we could eat the fishes all from **the heads to tails**.

And that benefited to my school day's selfish cooking. Of course fish cooking is my job in my home even now.

HAKO-ZU-KE (Box Snare)

Set up "BOX SNARE"
in the evening.

The box is the used
fish or apple package
(I could take it from a
neighboring general
store).



You need
reinforcement by
driving nails.



Set up the snare the place
where no one set up.

Baits are the same as
"OKETSUKE".

a rubber band



Put them
into vinyl
package.



Make
some
holes in
the vinyl
bag.



Set up the snare in a
shallow riverbed after
digging a hole there half
the depth of the box.



The vinyl bag should be placed in the
center of the box and some stones
over it.



Keep it there one night.

At night, fishes
enter into
openings
between the
stones, invited
by the smell of
the baits.
Fishes remain
sitting there.



The next morning, take out some stones so that
you can raise up the box. Don't take all the stones out, or
the fishes are going to escape.



When you carry the
box back to the
shore, don't raise it
above the water.
Keeping it in the
water (bottom picture)
allows you to carry it
easily because of the
Archimedes principal.
You had better get
your friend to help
when you carry the
box to the bank and
you should share the
fish with friends in the
case of a large catch.



I was always excited expecting a large
catch when I removed the stones from
the box. There were always Eels,
"SUBOGUCHI", etc.

YOBURE (Night Fishing)

"YOBURE" means night fishing in the river under the light of an acetylene torch, starting at around nine o'clock in the evening.

It was a great pleasure to go night fishing with my father, when we walked up the river, in the shallow water, two to three kilometers. We walked on the bank when the river became too deep. By gazing at the water you could easily find sleepy fish swimming inactively and also still fish on the bottom of the river, which you scooped out by net or speared by halberd.

I enjoyed the fun itself with my father at midnight, rather than the quantity of the catch.



It's convenient for the net (**SADE**) and the three points halberd (**HOKO**) to be attached to both sides of the same bamboo.



JAPANESE TOWEL
Bandage for emergency



BIKU A funnel-shaped fish container made of bamboo.



a **MATCH**
Never get them wet.

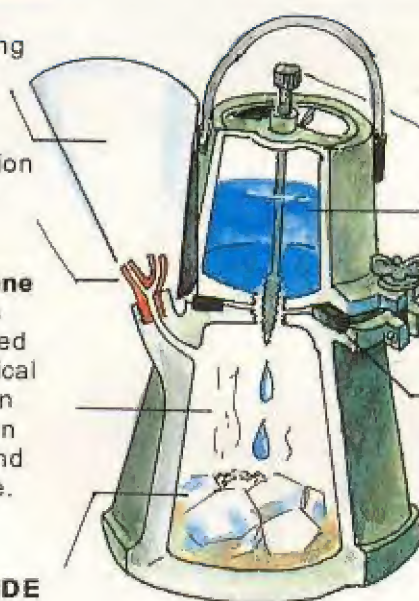
Carried Equipment

A condensing lens

The ignition hole

Acetylene gas is generated by chemical reaction between water and carbide.

CARBIDE
Sold at general shops.



WATER TANK

Water should always be full from the river,

Center rod controls the water drop.

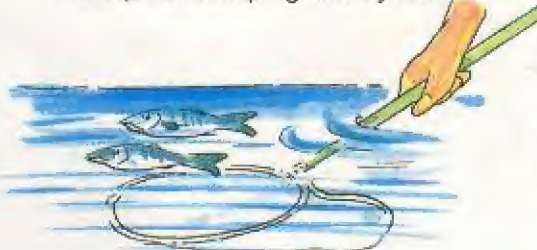
Fasten bolts tightly lest gas leaks.

* This picture was drawn only from memory and so this is not necessarily accurate.

Aim the target which is still on the bottom and spear it rapidly and powerfully.



Scoop the sleeping fish by net.



The full moon is not good for fishing and a dark night is best for a large catch.

MOGU-RI and HOKO-TSUKI

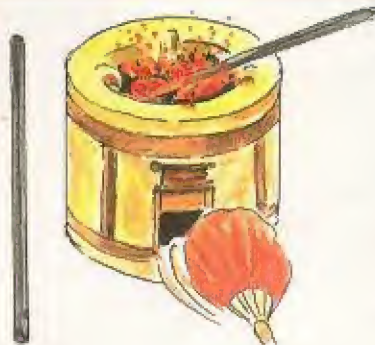
(Diving, Thrusting Fishes By Halberd)

I could dive and spear many kind of fish, which are Crucian, Carp, Catfish, Eels, YAMASO, Dace etc. It is not only the most enjoyable, but also profitable play for children.



How to make IPPON-HOKO (One halberd)

First, you should find a used rod, approximately 20-30 cm in length and of a pencil's diameter, such as an old window rail, iron chopstick, parts of a bicycle or something like that.

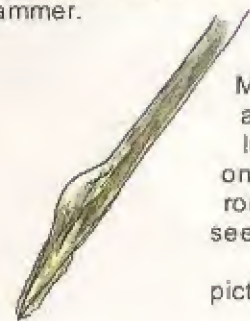


Burn it until it turn bright red on a portable clay cooking stove.

Beat and shape it roughly to the shape of HOKO (halberd) with a hammer.



Make the spearhead keen edged gradually by beating and heating repeatedly.

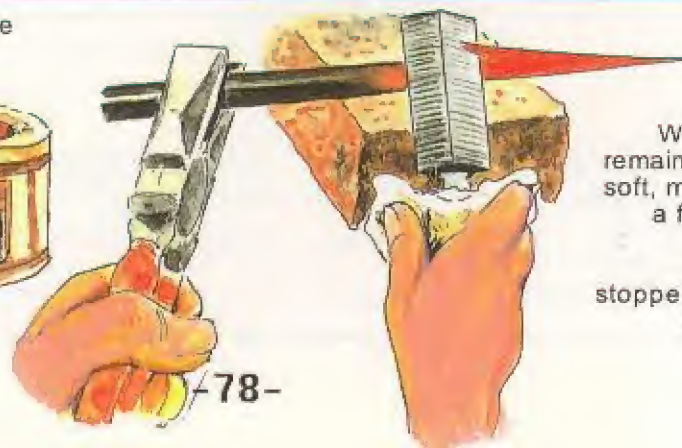


Make a flat lump on the rod as seen in the picture.

File the spearhead.



Repeat the heating.



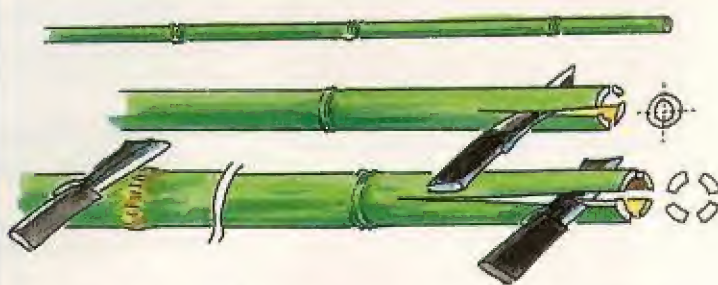
When it is hot and remains bright red and soft, make a hook with a file or a chisel as seen in picture. This hook is the stopper so as not to let the fish escape.

TO TEMPER

When you have finished forming it, you should harden the spearhead.



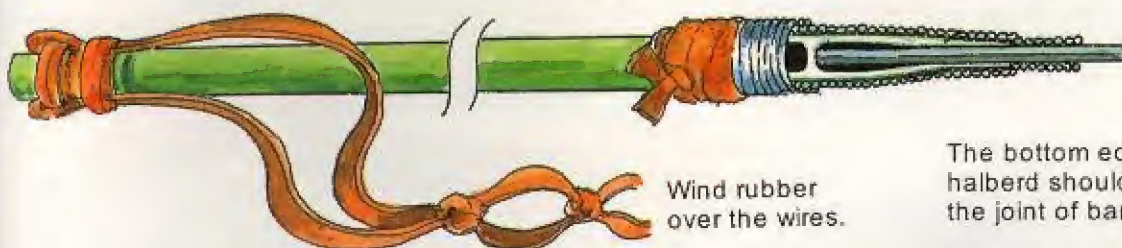
Hardening is cooling it into the water rapidly after heating it. The timing of cooling is delicate.



Every bamboo joint must be scraped clean and flat.



Insert HOKO, a halberd, to the bamboo and fasten tightly with wires.



Wind rubber over the wires.

The bottom edge of the halberd should be right inside the joint of bamboo.

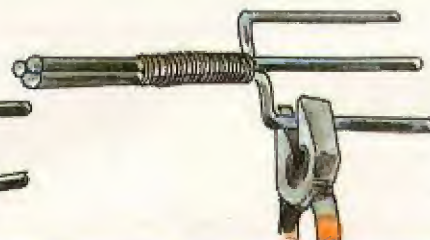
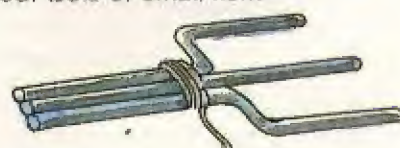
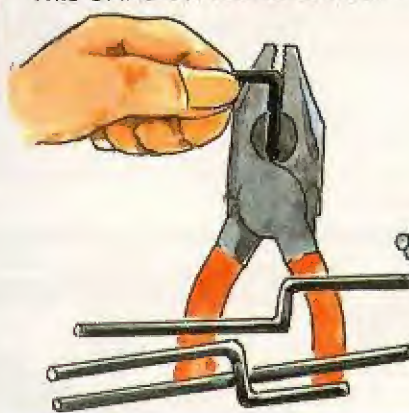
SAN-BON-HO-KO (Three Halberd Jointed)

HOW TO MAKE

Materials are narrow iron rods, such as the spokes of a disused bicycle or needles of "SENBAKOKI", a conventional threshing machine.

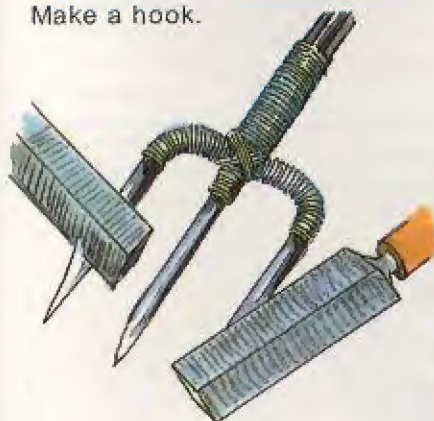
Bend them, as seen in the picture, using a plier or vise. When you joint it to the bamboo, do the same method as with IPPON-HOKO mentioned above.

This SANBON-HOKO is used to spear Eels or small fish.

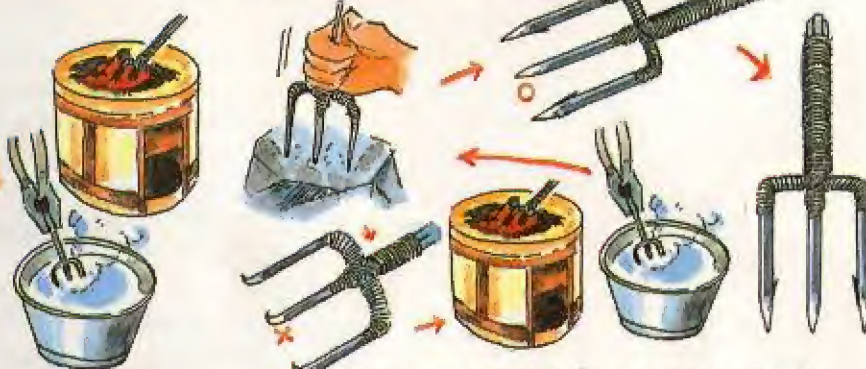


It is better to reinforce the joint of the three rods by soldering.

Make a hook.



Hardening is necessary, when the materials are soft iron. (See the picture of IPPON-HOKO.)



Make a keen edge to the spearhead with a file.

When you thrust in into a stone and the spearhead is crushed, it is necessary to harden and to make it keen edged again.

TEPPOH-HO-KO (Gun Halberd)

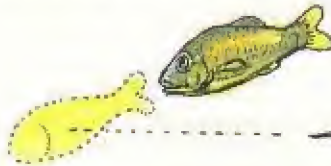


1 Pull the rod sliding to the grip and hook the trigger to the hole of the slide case.

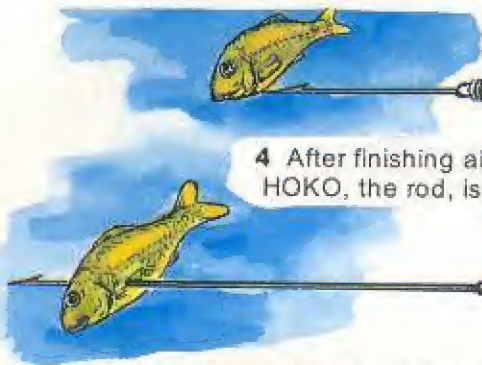


2 When your forefinger touches the trigger, TEPPOH-HOKO, a gun halberd, is ready for shooting.

3 When you find a fish in the water, you should aim in front of the fish, estimating the direction it will go in.



4 After finishing aiming, pull the trigger, and shoot the fish. HOKO, the rod, is sliding in the case towards the fish.



5 The rod stop thrusts at the stopper on the edge of the case. You cannot shoot the fish without knowing your effective range and distance.

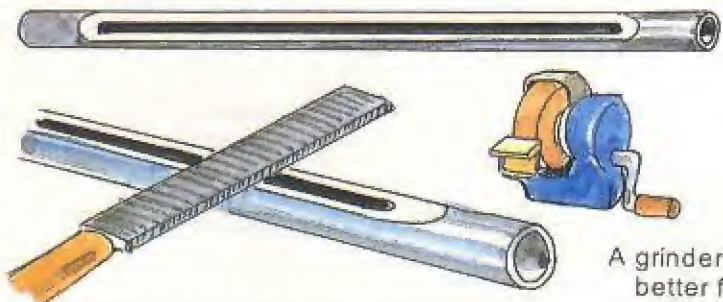
* This TEPPOH-HOKO, a gun halberd I had been investigating continually in my elementary school days, was almost all of my invention. I think that, probably, someone had produced the prototype, but that was my original one which nobody in my hometown had, also these types were fairly well spread to other children. But I feel confident that my TEPPOH-HOKO had a higher performance.

HOW TO MAKE

Cut an axis of disused umbrella, which is for the iron case.



Make the groove in which the trigger slides by filing patiently.



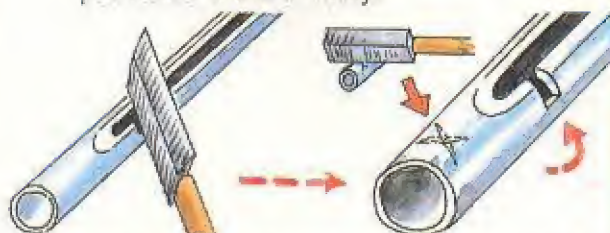
A grinder is better for making the groove.

Complete the edge of the groove round by filing so that the trigger in it can slide easily.



Complete it as seen in the picture.

As HOKO, the rod, is attached to a wooden grip by a nail, cut a cross line on the case so that the nail is able to penetrate the rod easily.



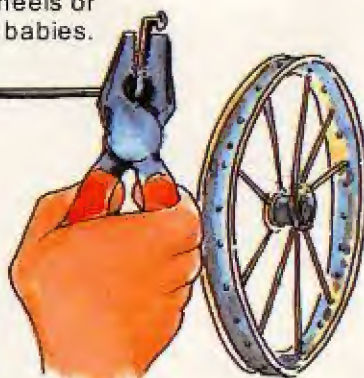
Make a hole in which the trigger is hooked.

The case can also be made of bamboo, which can be easily made but also be easily destroyed. And it sometimes was made of plastic water tube.

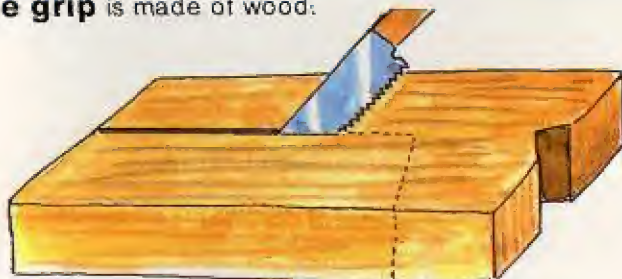


The shaft, HOKO, is made of the unused spoke of bicycle's wheels or frames of a mosquito net for babies.

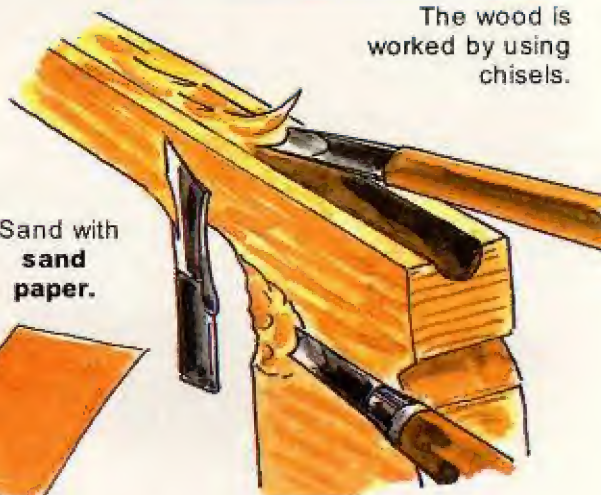
Make the keen edged spearhead and bend 2 cm at a 90 degrees angle on the other edge.



The grip is made of wood:

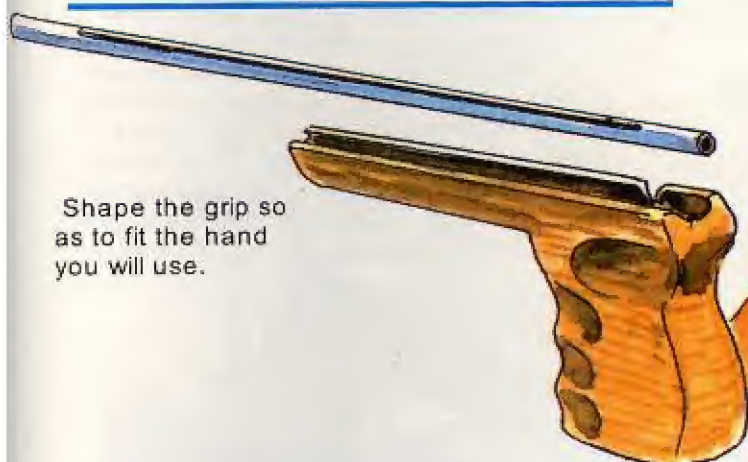


The wood is worked by using chisels.

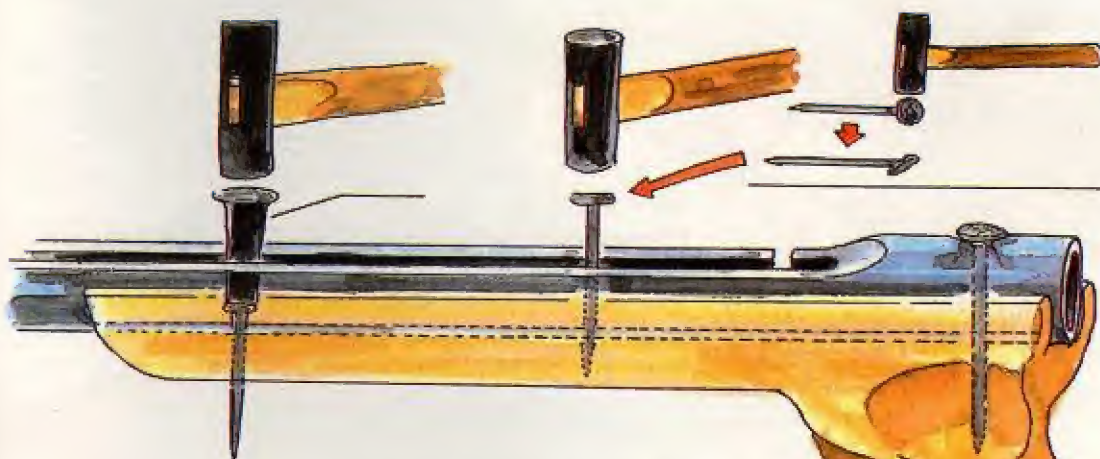


Sand with sand paper.

Shape the grip so as to fit the hand you will use.

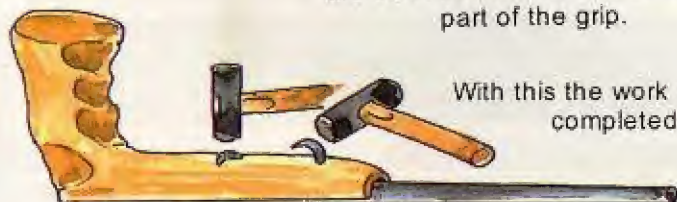


Hammer nails by using a wedge.

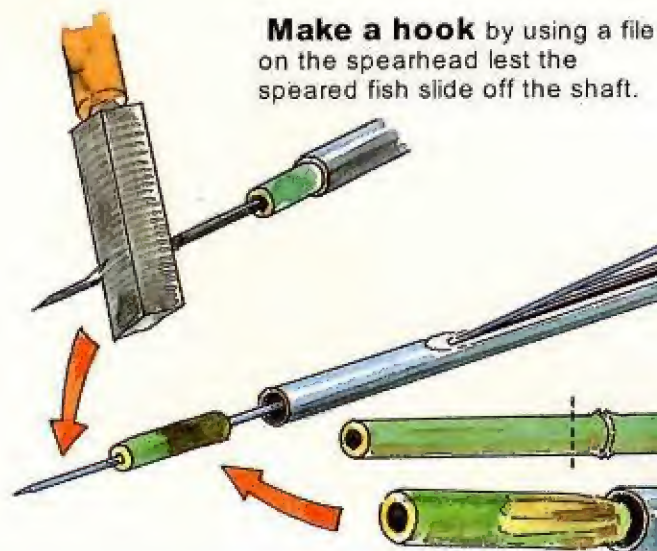


Nail heads should be narrower than the width of the groove carved in the case.

Hammer in the other nail to fix the case to the grip.
The penetrating tip of the nails are bent and driven into the lower part of the grip.

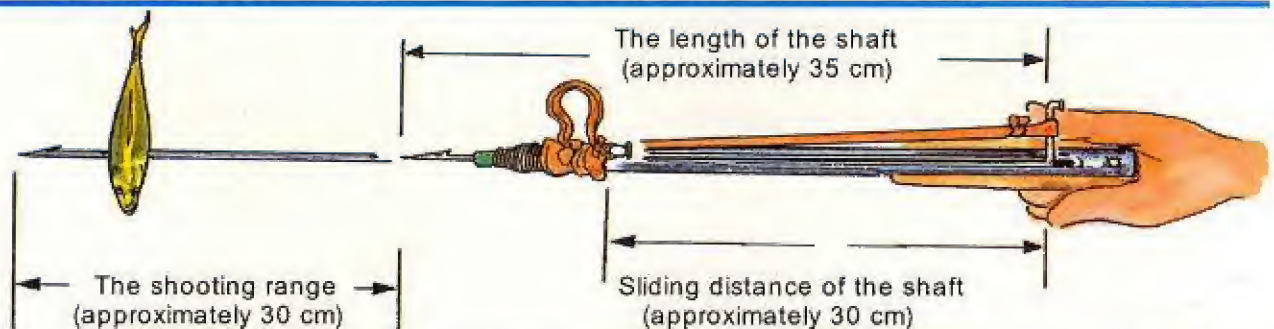
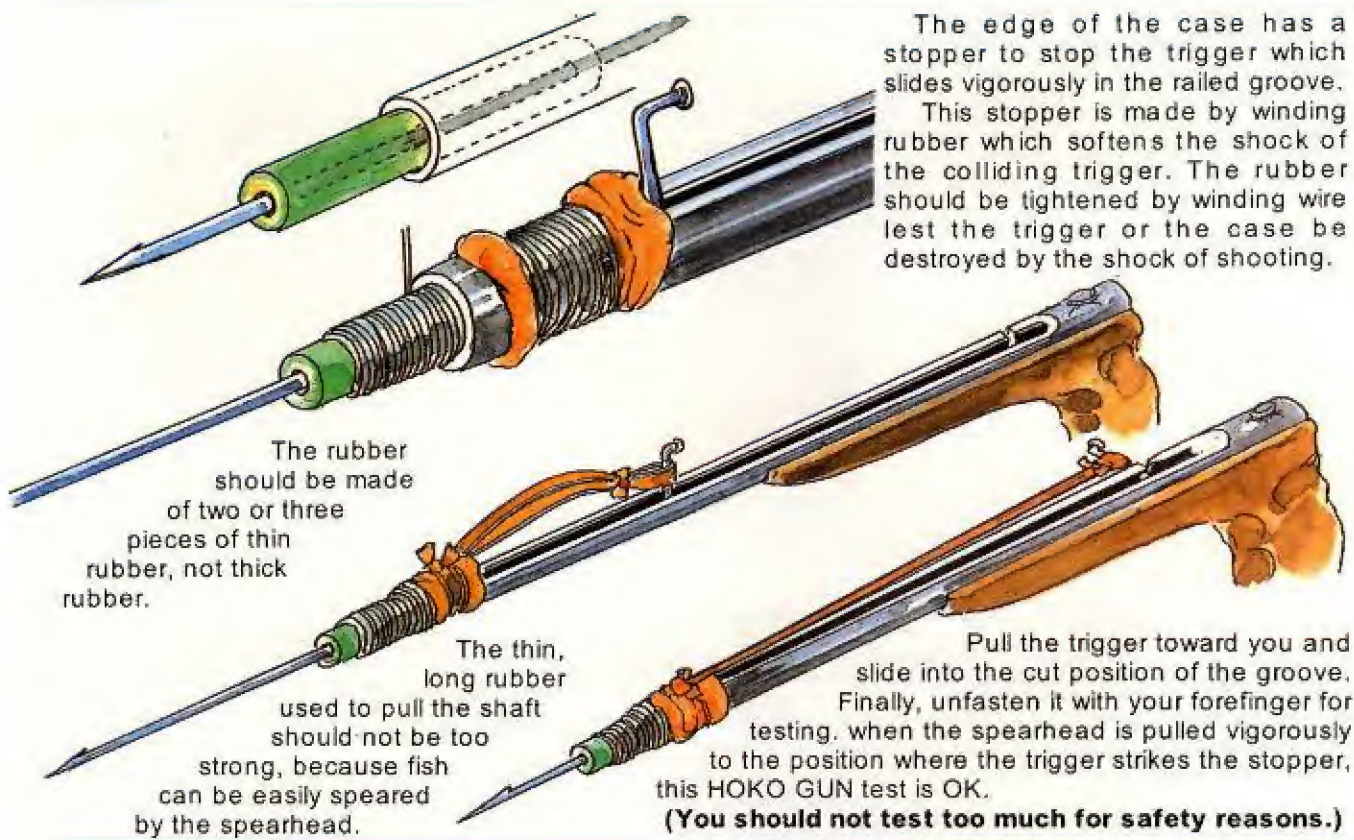


With this the work is roughly completed.



Put the shaft, HOKO, into the case.

Attach the bamboo, which has a diameter which is the same as the inside diameter of the case, to the spearhead position so that the shaft fits snugly in the case and smoothly slides toward the target.

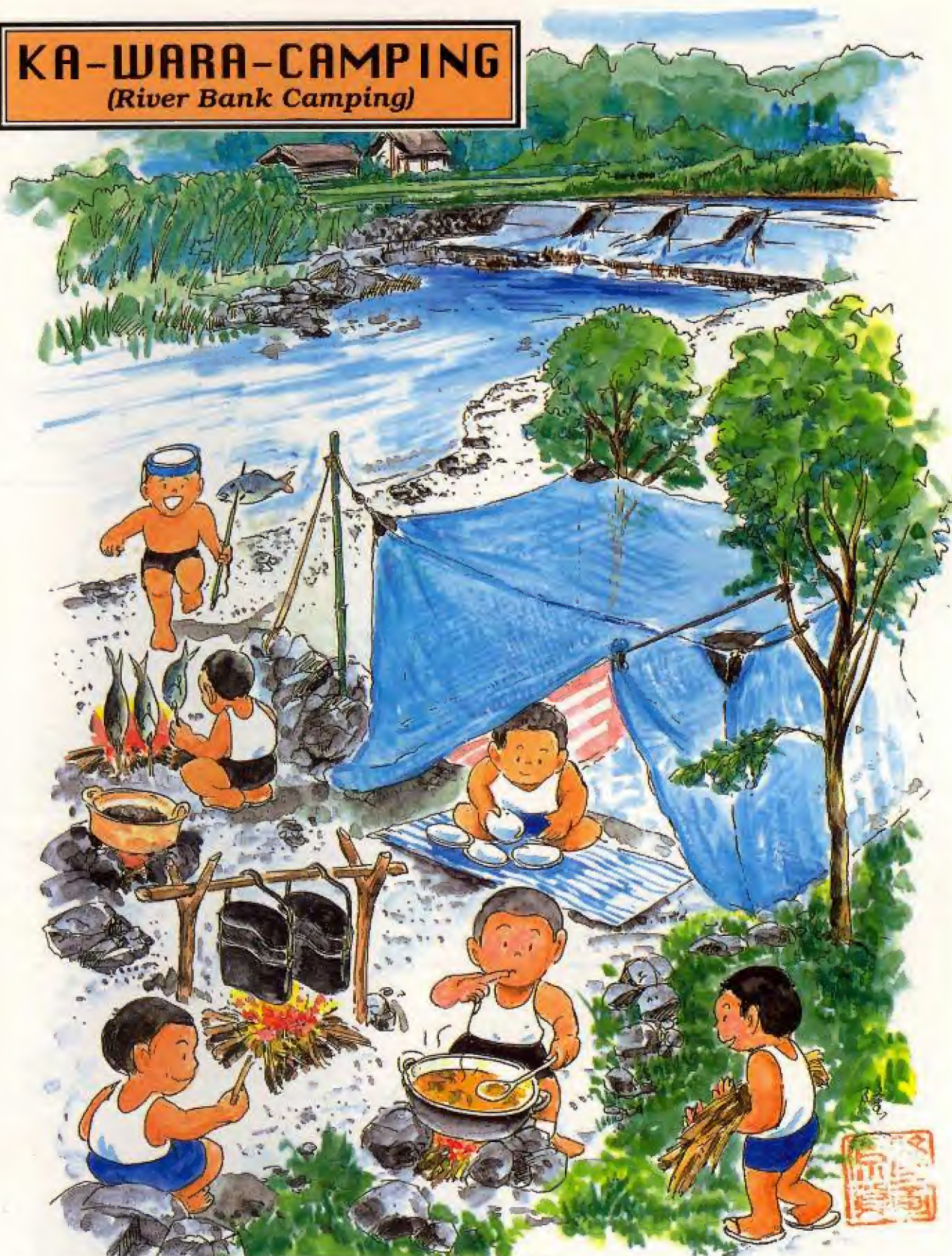


***Never leave the trigger in the setting-up position except when you seek and shoot fish in the water.**

You may think HOKO GUN is dangerous, but no one was injured by it in those days even though children competed to make better ones. This gun has a high accuracy bull's-eye rate, whether for big or small fish, even Eels. The number of fish caught was overwhelming compared to the normal IPPON-HOKO, being as much as 2-3 kg a day.

KA-WARA-CAMPING

(River Bank Camping)



We enjoyed camping at the river-side or field. The best part was cooking, so we also enjoyed day-time camping. Our tent was a mosquito net. Several children brought rice, soy-sauce, sugar, a rice-cooker pot or a small pan, etc.

Everyone had a role fishing with spear, cooking rice, making curry sauce, etc. It got quite dark when we finally started eating lively, and it was just the time for **a camp-fire**, too. ...And, time to sleep in **the mosquito net**.

Such exciting nights.

HANGOU-GOHAN (RICE-COOKER POT Cooking)

We have a rice-cooker pot called HANGO for out-door cooking.

I often cooked rice for my parents busy with farming since I was the only child.

So I was a good cook at camp-sites.



I found lots of springs coming out in the fields in those days, and that was a good place to rub and rinse rice.



Change the water a few times, taking care not to drop rice until the water runs clear.

You need quite a bit of experience to know the exact amount of water for rice.

(Some HANGOs have scales, but experience is most reliable.)



The basic rule of cooking is as in the following rhyme:
**at the start with a small fire,
in the middle with a vigorous fire,
and never open the lid even if a baby starts crying with hunger.**



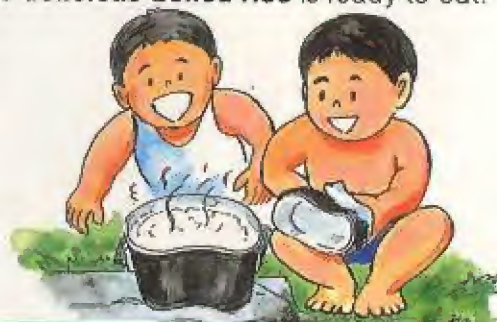
Reduce the fire when the pot overflows and cook for 10 minutes.

Tap the upper part of the pot. The sound tells you whether it's ready or not.

Put the pot up-side down on the grass and let it steam for about 10 minutes.



Now, the delicious boiled rice is ready to eat!



TAKE-SU-I-HAN (BAMBOO-RICE-COOKER- POT Cooking)

Cut a big fresh bamboo with joints on both sides.

Pour in the needed amount of rice and water in the hole.



Make a hole.



Cooking.
Don't burn the bamboo-pot until the rice is cooked.

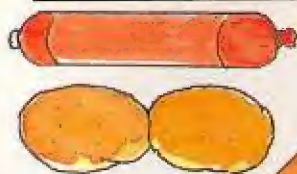


When you eat, split the bamboo.

The way to cook is almost the same as "HANGOO" cooking.

CURRY RICE

The most popular dish at camp-sites is curry rice.



Dice **potatoes** and **sausages**, and fry them with **margarine** or oil.
Stir them constantly so as not to stick to the frying pan.



Add **water** and boil until the potatoes become **soft**. Scoop and remove lye while cooking.
Add ready-to-use curry paste (solid) and cook stirring over a gentle fire. It is ready to eat when the soup becomes thick.

COOKING RIVER-FISH (NI-TSUKU)

Cut the belly of a fish and take out the guts.

Remove scales of the Crucian from tail to top with your thumb nail or knife.



Grill lightly the surface so as to keep the shape while cooking.



You can eat it as a grilled fish, adding some salt. It is very tasty.

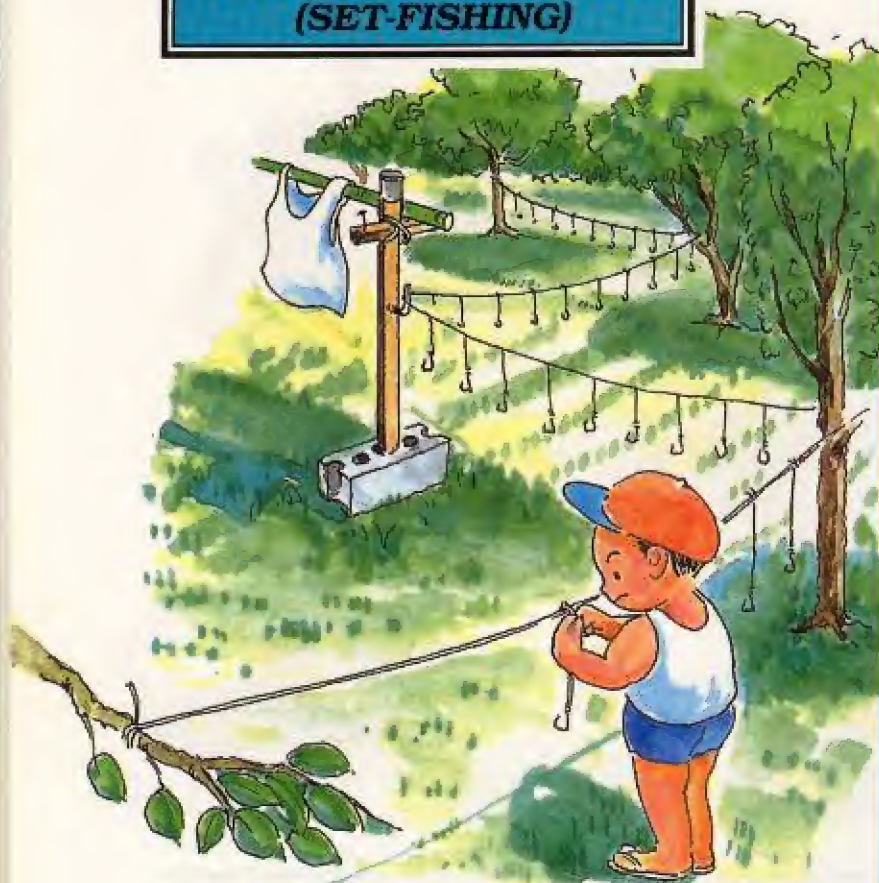
Add some **sugar** and **soy-sauce** to **water**.
(At home, I used to add some Rice-Wine "MI-RI-N".)

Cook fish in the broth over a gentle fire with an **inner lid-cover**.
Be careful not to let it scorch.

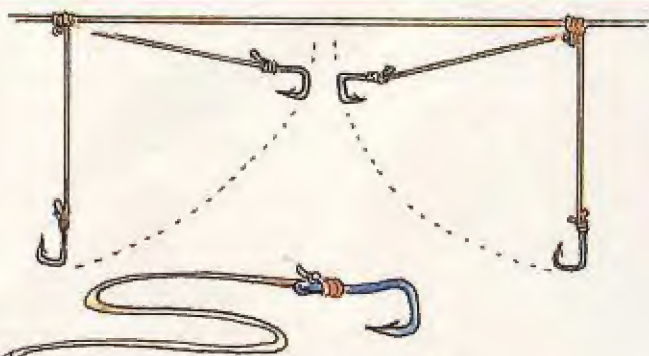
This stewed fish is so soft and delicious that you can eat the whole fish (even the head), and you ask for several helpings of rice.



TSU-KE-BA-RI (SET-FISHING)

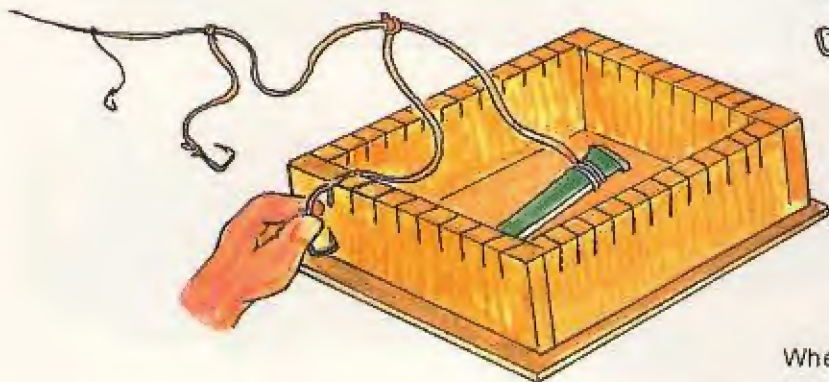


Extend around 100 meters of string (line) and tie hooks proportionately.

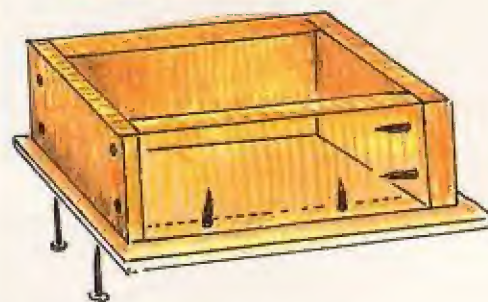


The hooks should not touch each other.

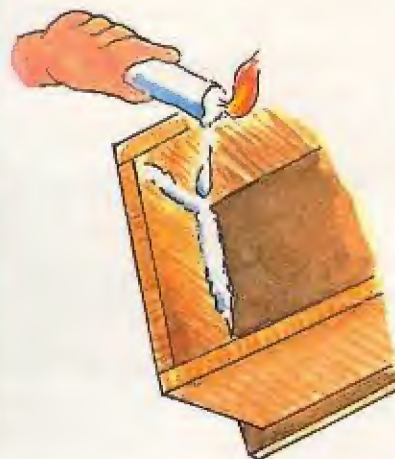
Tie bamboo sticks to both ends of the line.
Set hooks one by one in the notches in one direction.



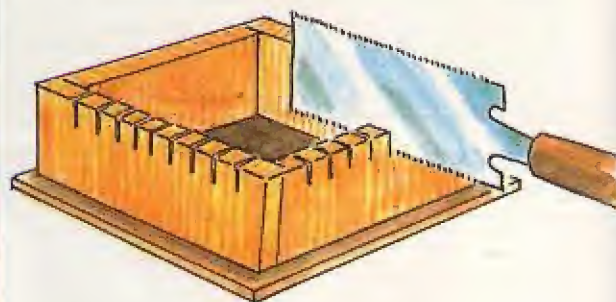
Exclusive use BOX.



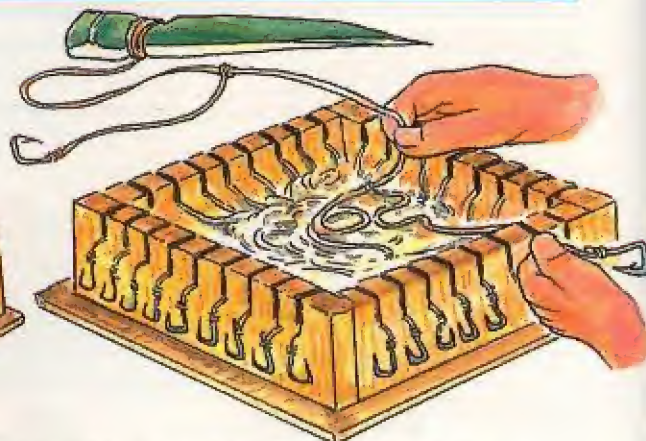
A hard wooden box is used to set the line.



Seal the gaps with melted candle to make it float on the river for hours.



Make notches with a saw.
(Pay attention to the direction of the grain, so as the piece between 2 notches doesn't fall off.)



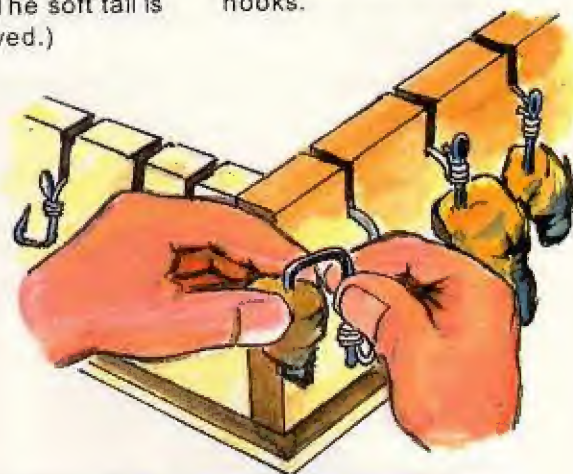
When setting in all the notches, set in the second round.

PREPARATIONS FOR FISHING

Collect pond mud snails for bait, as many as the hooks if possible.

Break shells and take out meat. (The soft tail is to be removed.)

Set snails to all the hooks.



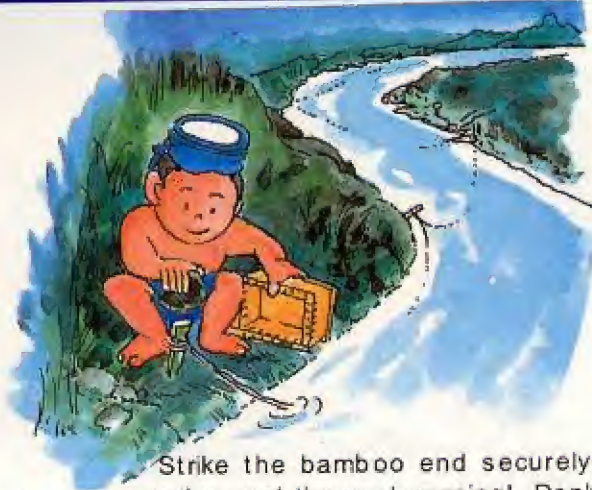
Late in the evening, the line of hooks is set off the river one by one from the last hook placed in the box.



Stand several bamboo sticks to keep the line apart.



Also place stones so it will not drift away or get entangled.



Strike the bamboo end securely, and expect the next morning! Don't forget the place you set the line.

Early in the next morning, around 5 o'clock, I hurried to the site.

The morning exercise with radio music started at 6:30 and I also had to finish delivering newspaper, so I rushed to the river as early as possible.

Even in mid-summer, the river water at 5 a.m. was quite chilly and it demanded determination to step in at first.

Once in water I didn't feel so cold. "What kind of fish are caught today?"

Expectation and excitement overwhelmed chills and everything else. Such a thrilling moment to pull up the line!



Keep the box afloat from setting the line till drawing in, so that the line doesn't get entangled within the box in the water.



Start drawing from the last hook and set hooks **again one by one** in order.

The hooks with fish are also set with **longer** line so as not to let the box sink with the weight of fish.

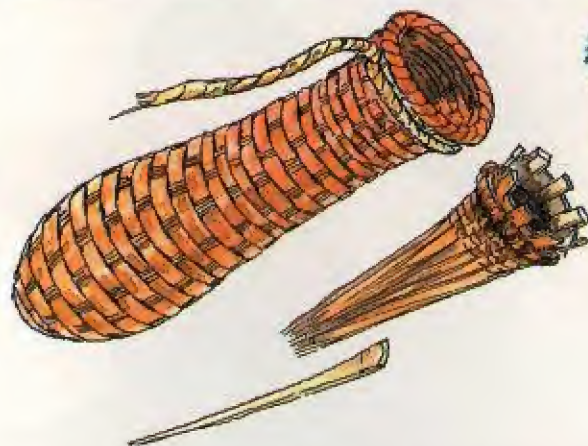


Set all the hooks on the box. Common fish were catfish, Gyu-gyu, and Crucian Carp.

After coming home, take off the fish and dry the line.

U-NA-GI-TE-BO (Eel-Trap Basket)

Elderly people used to make Eel-trap baskets out of bamboo. I couldn't make one, so I asked an old man to weave one for me.



The mouth of a basket is shaped like a funnel.

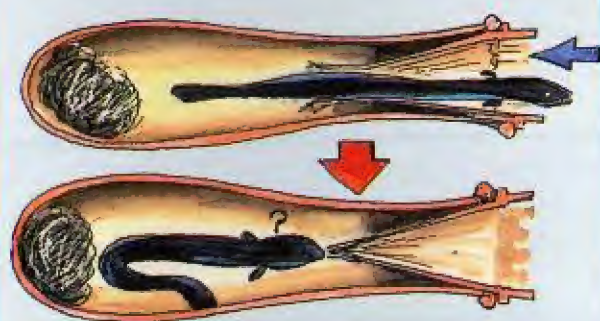


The bait is earthworm. Put the worm covered with hemp-palm into the bottom and cover the funnel-shaped lid to the mouth.

Late in the afternoon sink the baskets with stone weights in a rocky river. Leave them there overnight. Eels come into the baskets attracted by worms through the narrow entrance. They cannot get out after eating worms since the bamboo funnel is one-way.



When an Eel get into the hole, it goes tail first ! Then it can't get out because of the funnel.



Early in the next morning pull the baskets up.



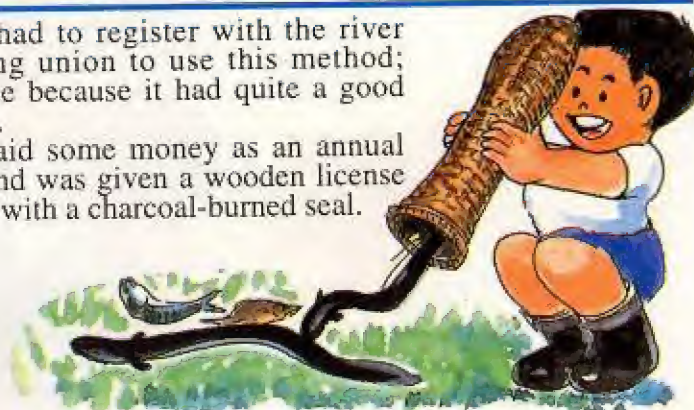
Take off the lids.



This tool generally brought in a good catch, and Crucian Carp and other fish could also be caught.

We had to register with the river fishing union to use this method; maybe because it had quite a good catch.

I paid some money as an annual fee and was given a wooden license plate with a charcoal-burned seal.



U-NA-GI-RYO-RI

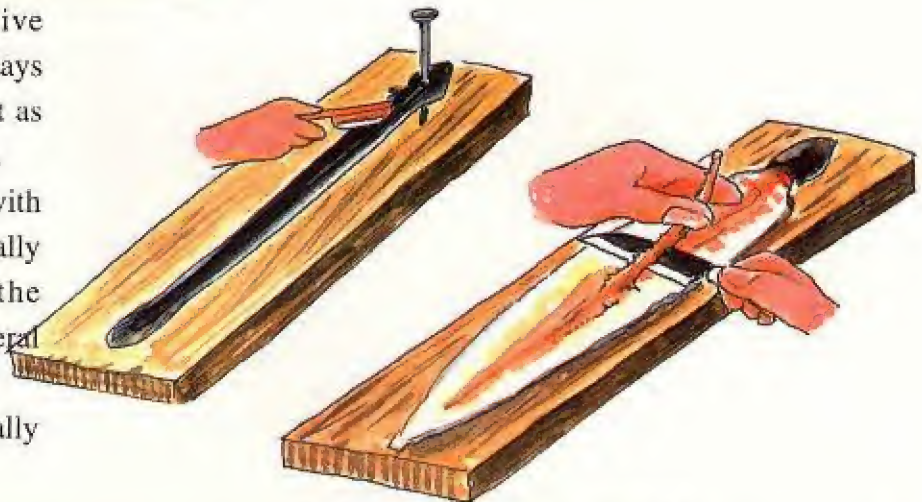
(Eel Cooking)

First pin the head of an Eel with a nail, and cut the back with a blade.

Eel seems to be an expensive food even today, and in those days it was a luxury since it was not as easy to catch like Crucian Carp.

I wrote as if I caught a lot with the line or the baskets, but actually the whole catch through the summer was 14 to 16 with several attempts.

So when I caught an Eel, I really enjoyed cooking it.



Take out the bones with a knife.

Cut it into a few pieces and broil them lightly over a charcoal fire.

Dip them in the sauce (**mixture of soy-sauce, sugar, sake, and seasoning**), and broil them again.

Broil over the charcoal fire. Repeat broiling and dipping in the sauce several times. You can use a brush to add the sauce.



Repeat it several times. Delicious broiled Eel is ready! It was the main dish for supper. Those days in secluded villages river fish was an important source of protein. Children enjoyed fishing not only as fun but also to help the family kitchen.

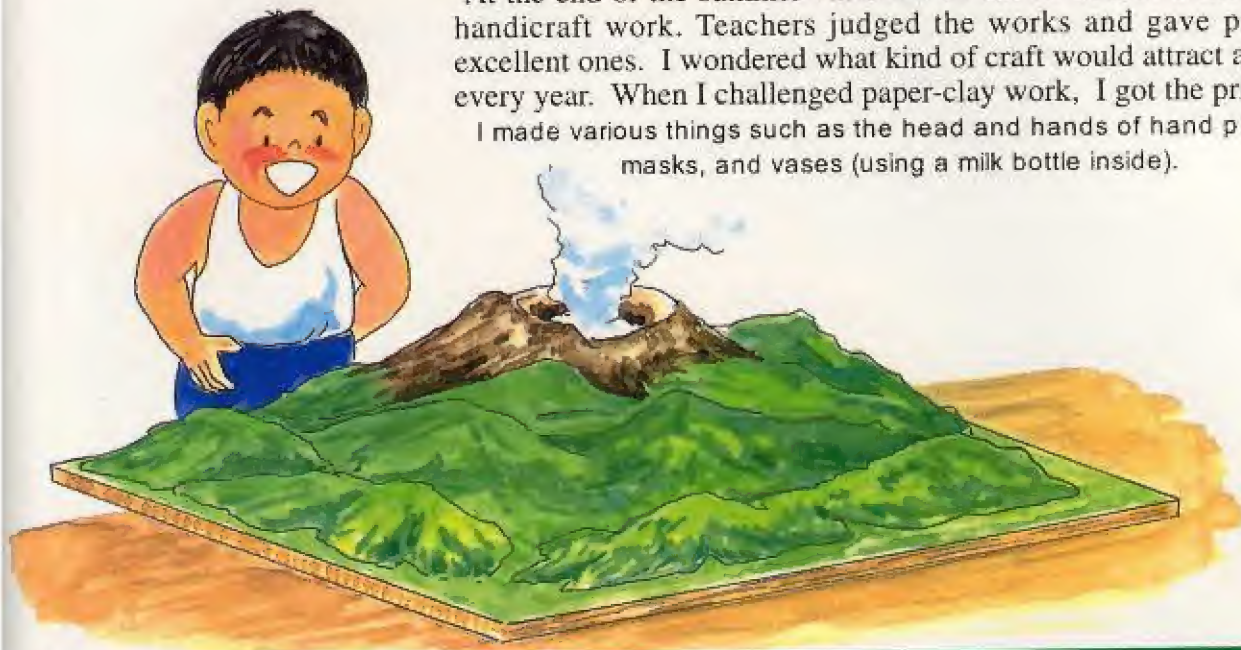
When I
had a GOOD
catch,
I shared
it with my
parents!



KAMI-NE-N-DO (Paper-Clay Work)

At the end of the summer vacation we had to submit some kind of handicraft work. Teachers judged the works and gave prizes to excellent ones. I wondered what kind of craft would attract attention every year. When I challenged paper-clay work, I got the prize.

I made various things such as the head and hands of hand puppets, masks, and vases (using a milk bottle inside).



How to make paper-clay: Tear newspaper into small pieces and add starch and a little water.

Mix them well.

When not mixed well, boil it in a pan.



My paper-clay volcano had the crater of a small glass bottle.

Color the scenery.

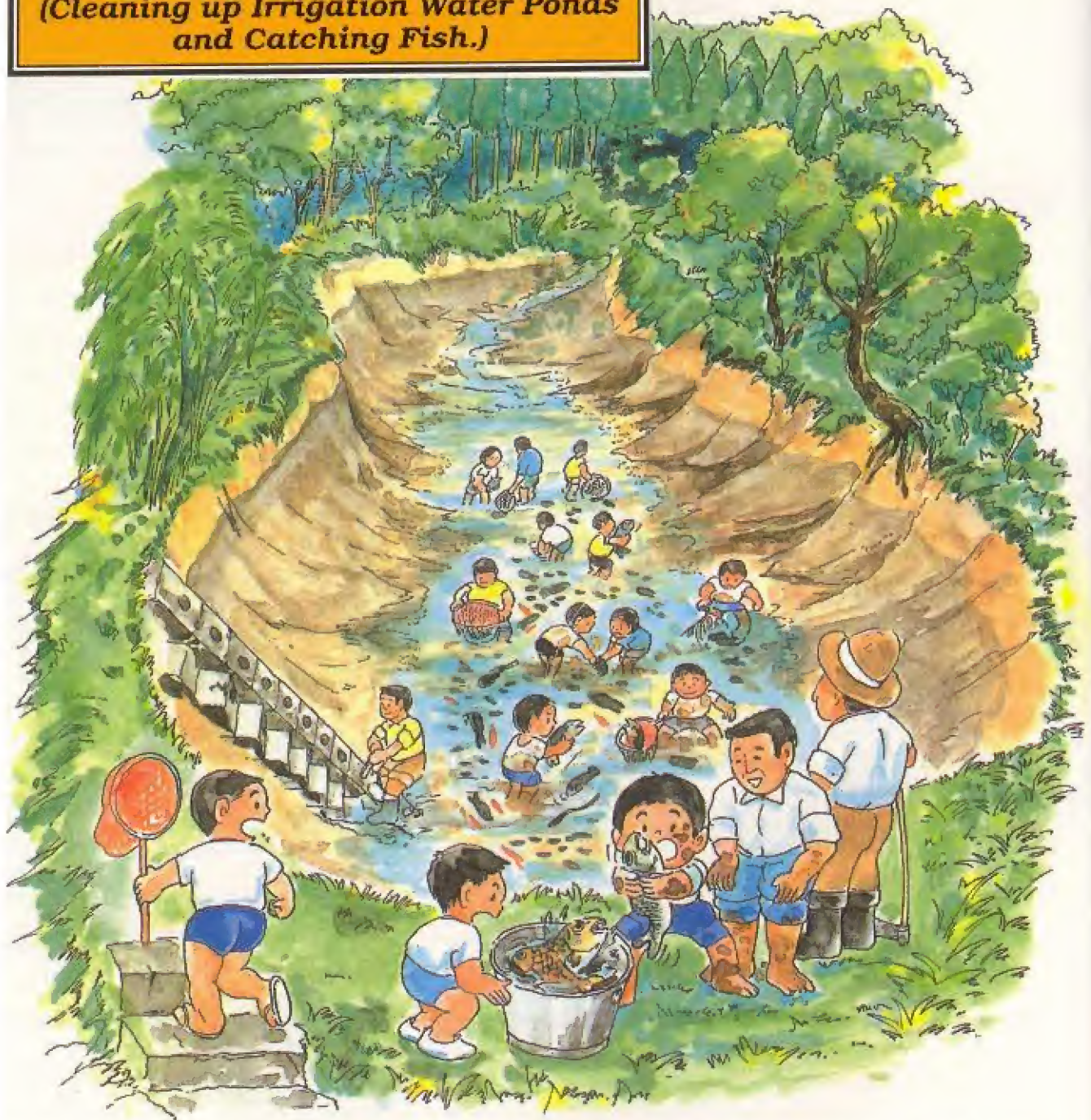
To make it more realistic, put a piece of dry ice and water!



(I got dry ice from a grocery store, where the refrigerator contained ice or dry ice. No electric refrigerator yet.)

TSU-TSU-MI-ZA-RA-E

(Cleaning up Irrigation Water Ponds
and Catching Fish.)



TSUTSUMI is a reservoir for farming. Water from springs and rain is saved for the stable water-supply into rice paddy fields. Each village had a few reservoirs above paddies. When sunny weather dried up the paddies, villagers discussed how much water should be drawn in. The plugs could control the quantity of the water-supply. Until the harvest season, water and fish (Carp, Crucian Carp, Eel) were also there.

One day in mid-September, the rice harvest season, the farmers went to the reservoir yelling, "Hey, let's clean up the TSUTSUMI (reservoir)."

Since water was no longer necessary, the reservoir was drawn by pulling out all the plugs. As the water became scarce, lots of fish appeared. We rushed into the muddy water and caught fish. Everyone enjoyed an easy fishing that day. Everybody, whether adult or child, got muddy and spent a joyful day.

Small fish were returned to the water for the next year. Fish laid eggs and the reservoir would have more fish next year.

TSUTSUMI kept one third of the water until the next rice planting season in early summer.

MI-ZO-YO-KE-HO-RI (Making Canals and Loach Catching)

Before the rice harvest season, farmers made ditches around the paddy fields to reduce water. In these ditches and swampy areas lots of Loaches could be found. We scooped them out with bamboo-baskets.



A Loach is a small, sticky, Eel-like fish in muddy fresh water. It was a good source of protein.

How to make loach soup.

Other ingredients are sliced burdock roots, diced taro yams, TO-FU (soybean curd) etc.

Soak soy-beans with Loaches in water for the night, to make them discharge mud.



Fry Loaches thoroughly with oil.



Add a pinch of salt and pepper.



Add burdock and taros, fry together for a while and add water, boil it until done (vegetables become soft).

Add more water and diced TOFU.



Scoop out lye.

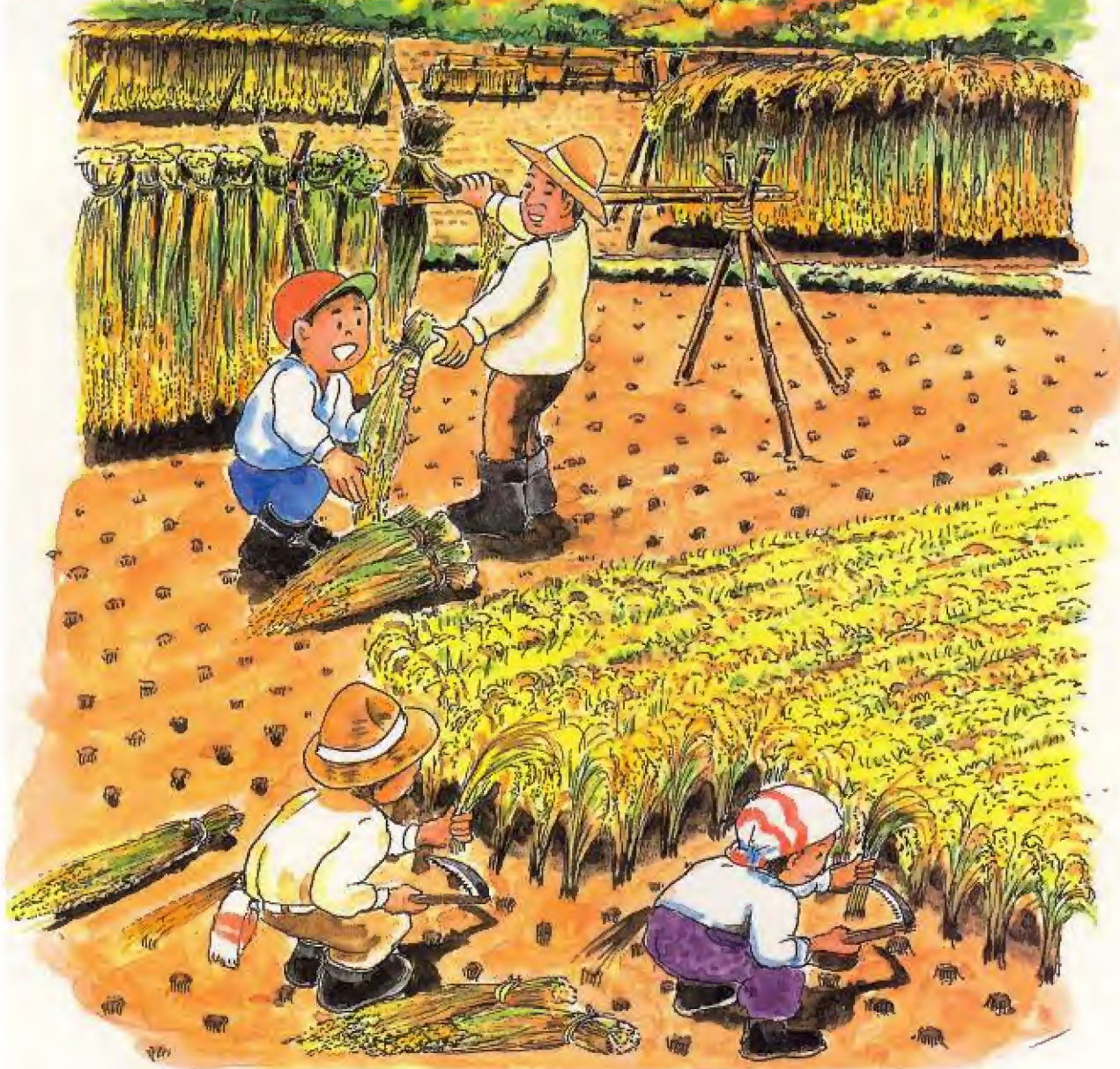


Add MISO (soy-bean paste) ,



grated ginger, and thinly sliced leeks at the end.

INE-KA-RI (Rice Harvest)



In October rice ears turn golden. It's the season of rice harvest everywhere under a clear sky.

The special sickles with a saw blade were used to cut several stalks at one time. Later 3 bunches of these stalks were made into one bundle with a rice plant rope. The rice bundles were then hung-dried. Each bundle split into 1 : 4 was hung on bamboo rods. Like dried flowers, they were hung up-side down.

When I was an elementary school boy, a few holidays were given so we could give a helping hand. They were special days off called **"busy farming season holidays"**. Girls made lunch boxes or helped in the kitchen. Boys, though not very helpful, joined the harvest. Since I was an only child, I also helped make lunch boxes.

Harvesting was a tough job. But I tried to keep up with the speed of my parents and sometimes I won, which encouraged me and made me try harder. The lunch of rice balls were the most delicious. We ate them in the rice fields. For a few days, harvesting continued and all the family members joined in until the sky turned red at dusk.

Rice was the biggest income source, and parents told me, **"No help, and I won't buy you anything."** Naturally I tried very hard.

While harvesting parents were estimating, "how many rice bags would be filled this year?"

BO-TAKA-TO-BI

(Pole Vaulting)



After the Olympics in Rome, Tokyo was designated as the site of the next Olympic games. Children imitated various sports such as **high jump, hop-step-and-jump, jump** etc. The one I enjoyed most was **pole vaulting**.

Drive nails into 2 columns 5 cm apart from each other. A thin bamboo was set as a bar. The cushion was the dried straw in harvested paddies. We cut bamboo to suitable length, and made it stronger by roasting and polishing. I could clear the bar to some height, but the difficult point was the timing to throw away the pole. I had to throw it away quickly so that it would not drop on the bar.

Besides competing, we enjoyed pole vaulting in such ways as jumping to higher banks, or jumping over streams. Just jumping around the field saying, "FU-N-WAKA. FU-N-WAKA (flying, flying!)" was fun.

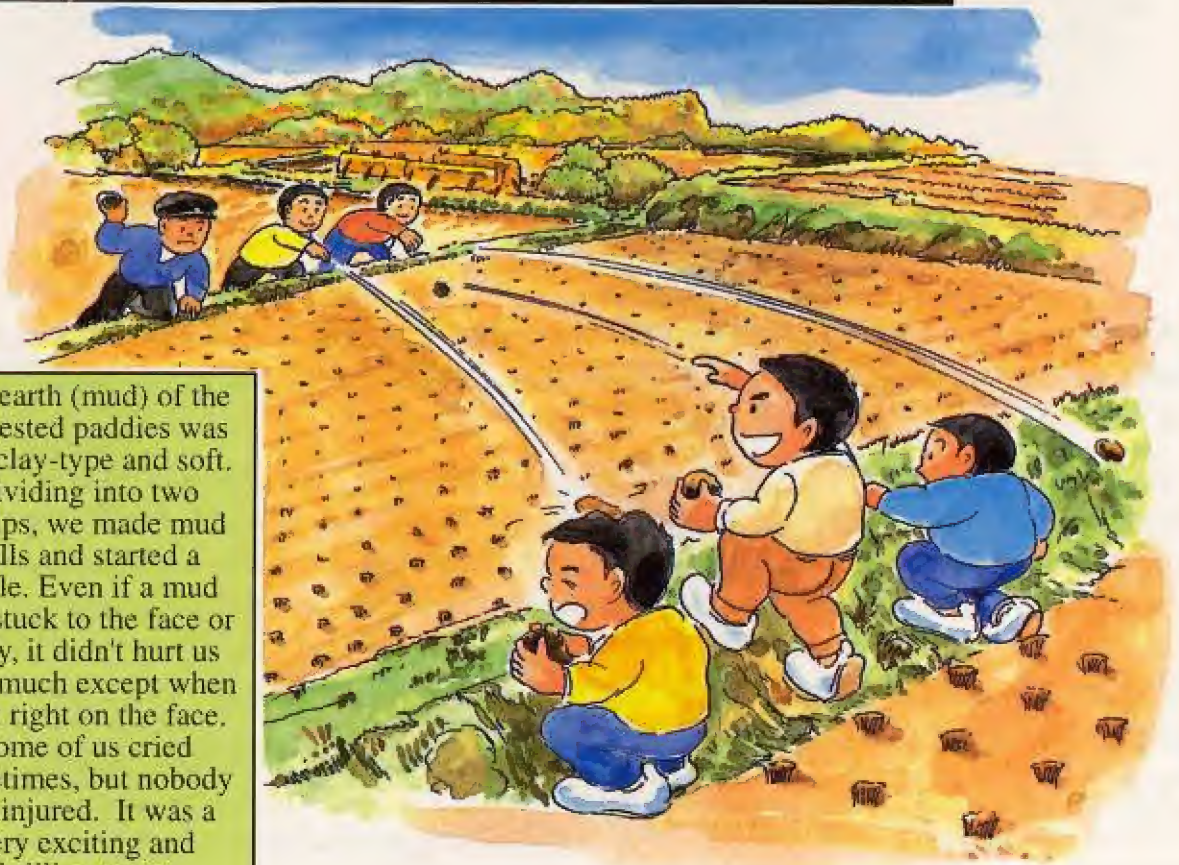
This game didn't seem popular even in my neighborhood. In my memory only a small group of children (including me) enjoyed it.

YA-RI-NA-GE *(Javelin Throwing)*



Paddy fields after the harvest were just like the big track field for us children. Everyone made his own spear out of bamboo and competed for who could throw farthest. Unless the spear stuck into the ground, the throw was a failure. It stuck well into the ground when I tied a cloth to the spear.

DORO-NA-GE-GAS-SEN *(Mud-throwing Battle)*

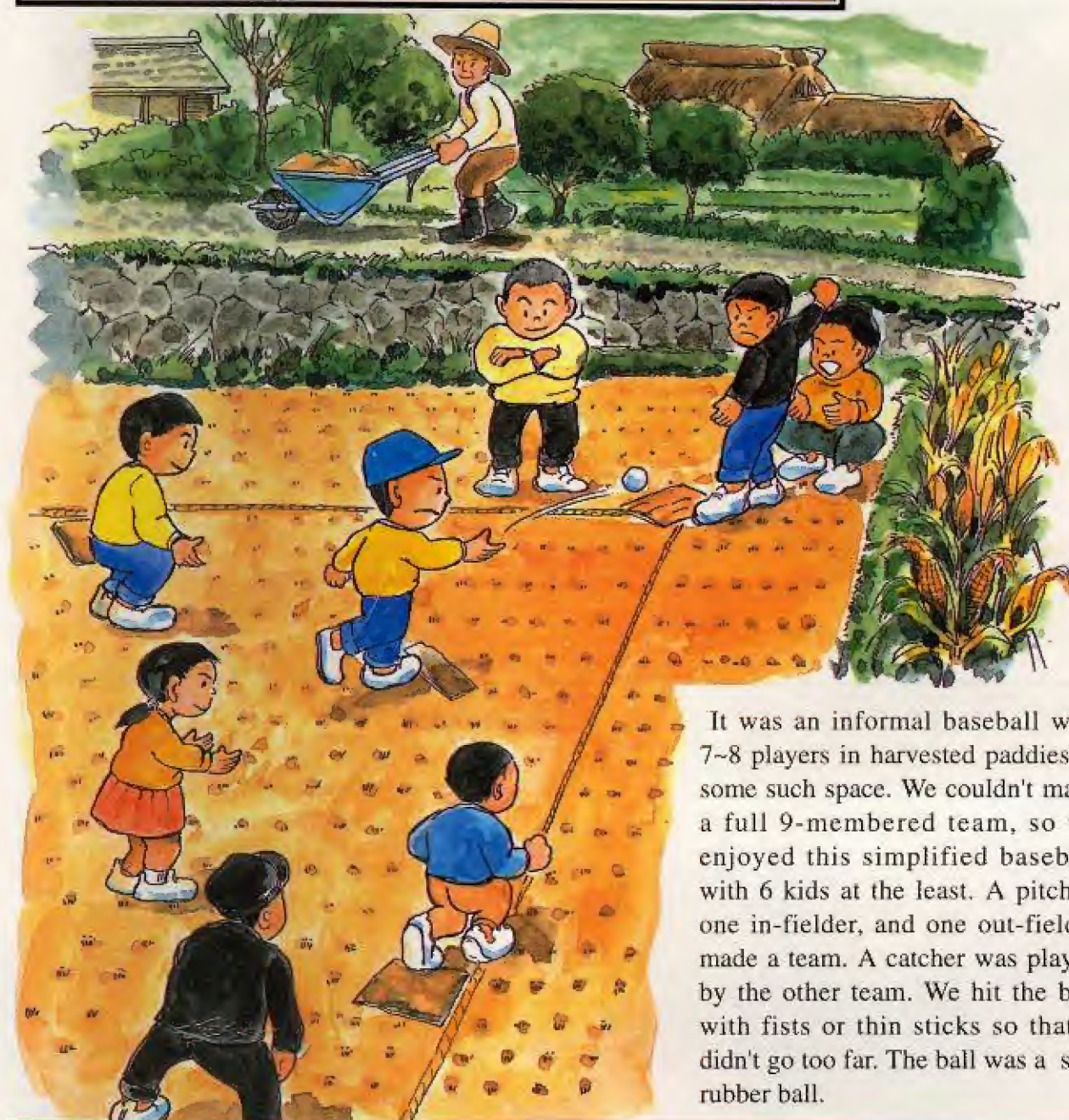


The earth (mud) of the harvested paddies was of a clay-type and soft.

Dividing into two groups, we made mud balls and started a battle. Even if a mud ball stuck to the face or body, it didn't hurt us very much except when it hit right on the face.

Some of us cried sometimes, but nobody got injured. It was a very exciting and thrilling game.

SAN-KAKU-YA-KYU (Triangle Baseball)



It was an informal baseball with 7~8 players in harvested paddies or some such space. We couldn't make a full 9-membered team, so we enjoyed this simplified baseball with 6 kids at the least. A pitcher, one in-fielder, and one out-fielder made a team. A catcher was played by the other team. We hit the ball with fists or thin sticks so that it didn't go too far. The ball was a soft rubber ball.

Other rules are as follows.

Up to second base, and fair-line angle is 45 degrees.

Pitch under-hand when hitting with fists, but an over-hand throw is all right when hitting with sticks.

Counting is the same as baseball, but only wide swings are counted as strikes. No four balls (no walk). Either hitting or a strike-out.

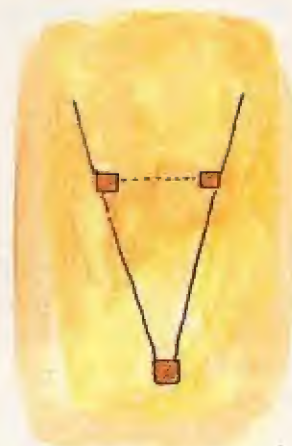
Three fouls makes one out.

When you hit within fair-line, run to first base. The defense catches the ball at first base--Out! The defense strikes the ball to the running player--also out. Even the thrown ball doesn't hit the runner and goes away, the runner can't reach 2nd base.

2nd base hits or home-runs are decided how far the ball goes, but even the biggest hit is out when caught by defense.

Runners can't take a lead while the pitcher holds a ball like in soft-ball.

No steals, nor bunting or squeeze since the catcher is a member of the defense team!



DAK-KOKU (Threshing)

After being hung-dried, harvested rice is threshed with a thresher. The hulled rice is then dried for several days. I was excited to see the motor.



SE-N-BA-KO-KI (Traditional Thresher)



Before threshers with motors were introduced, a treadle thresher was used. Teeth on the drum dropped off the chaff. It also dropped much straw, so with a TOHMI (separating fan, in the left) we separated rice from straw. The oldest type of SENBAKOKI was a cut wood with lots of metal bars attached. Threshing was done by pulling the rice stalks strongly between the bars.

Straw after being threshed is a wonderful resource with various uses, so it was bundled and stored in barns. (The use of straw is to be explained later.)

A thresher with motor was jointly bought and used in turn by neighborhood groups called **MOYAI**. MOYAI also labored and worked together.

TOHMI

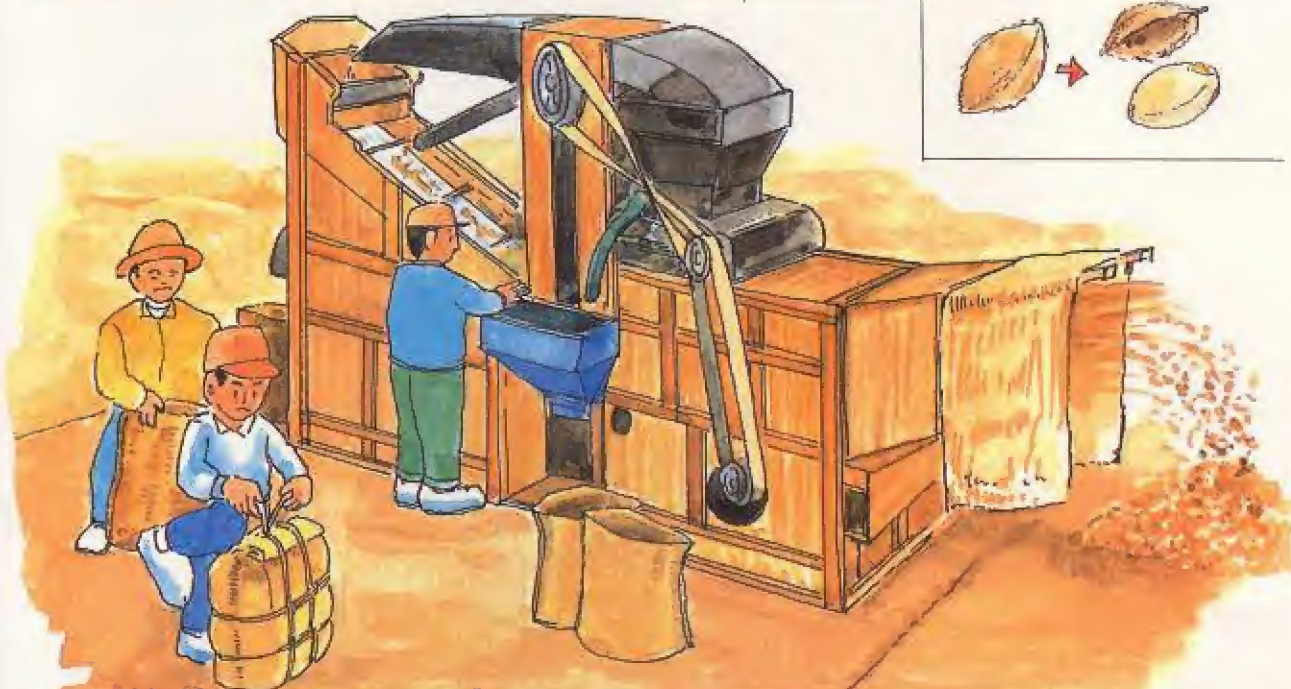
TOHMI was a big fan to separate rice from straw. Rice dropped down with its weight and straw is blown backward since it's light.



A heap of rice gradually became hollow like an ant-hell, which was fun to look at. So I often asked to let me sit on the TOHMI.

MOMI-SU-RI (Removing Chaff)

The chaff of the dried unhulled rice was then removed.



The hull remover machine was big and looked expensive, and most farmers didn't have their own. I heard my father say, "tomorrow Mr. Toda (who owned a machine and rent it to the farmers) will come, so I'll get everything ready." Since the rice harvest season was only several days, Mr. Toda seemed so busy to visit many farmers within a limited time. Once it was quite late at night when he appeared, and the work continued to midnight under the light, I remember. The machine separated hulled (brown) rice and hull. Farmers measured the plentiful rice from the machine and put it into straw bags. (1 measuring cup: 1 To = 18 liter, 1 straw bag = 4 To = 60 kg)

The rice was sent to agricultural CO-OPs for shipment. Now half an hour rice farming came to an end. At CO-OPs the rice is examined in dryness and quality and the payment was done through CO-OPs.

Incidentally, I remember, when I was 10 years old or so, that my father went to Tokyo for the petition of raising the farmers' price of rice. I respected my father talk about the National Diet building.

The remaining hull was burned from outside with an chimney in the center. It took hours to burn completely. The ash was soil neutralizer for rice paddies and other fields.

MOMI-GA-RA-YA-KI (Chaff Burning)

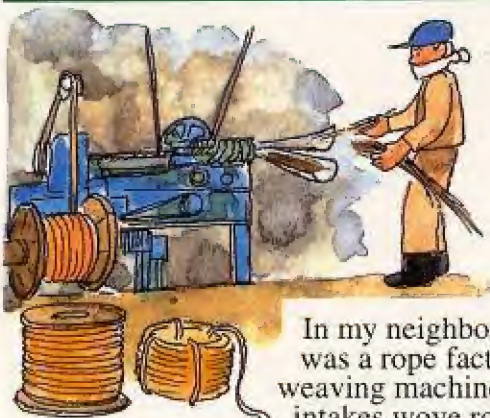


A heap of chaff burns slowly. Put sweet potatoes under the ashy part instead of the red-burning part. Potatoes and taros are also good.

After a while the potatoes are baked soft to the center, while the surface is not scorched. It's ready to eat!

VARIOUS USES OF RICE STRAW

Food And Bed Of Livestock
(Cattle And Sheep), And Compost
Straw for bed made into compost later.



Rope, Rug, and Carpet

In my neighborhood there was a rope factory. Rope-weaving machines with two intakes wove ropes though I don't remember the shape of the machine well.



Clay-wall Strengthening

Shredded straw in 2 inches size were mixed into clay for walls. Straw was said to make walls solid and prevent cracks.

Baskets And Bags

Various baskets and bags for farming were made of straw.



TATAMI-MAT Center and Sandals

When I was a child, straw sandals (called WARAJI) had almost been out of use except for a few old people. The inside of tatami-mats was 100 % straw in those days (covered with woven rush). I remember watching the tatami making at the sites of new houses being built.



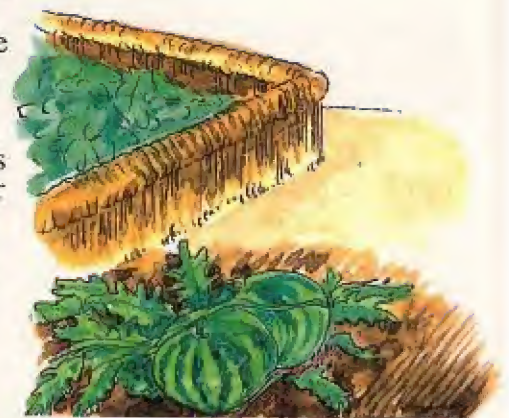
NATTO (Fermented Soybeans) and **KONNYAKU** (Yam Jelly)

Natto is to be explained in detail later. Konnyaku is made from konnyaku yam. The ash of straw is mixed in water. Mashed yam is soaked into the top (supernatant) of ash water to let it consolidate. Boil the solid yam. Konnyaku is ready.



Seedling Beds from Sweet Potatoes, And As A Bed For Fruits

Seedling beds from sweet potatoes were woven straw. Straw also covered the earth of fruits such as water melons, melons, and strawberries as a cushion to prevent weeds.

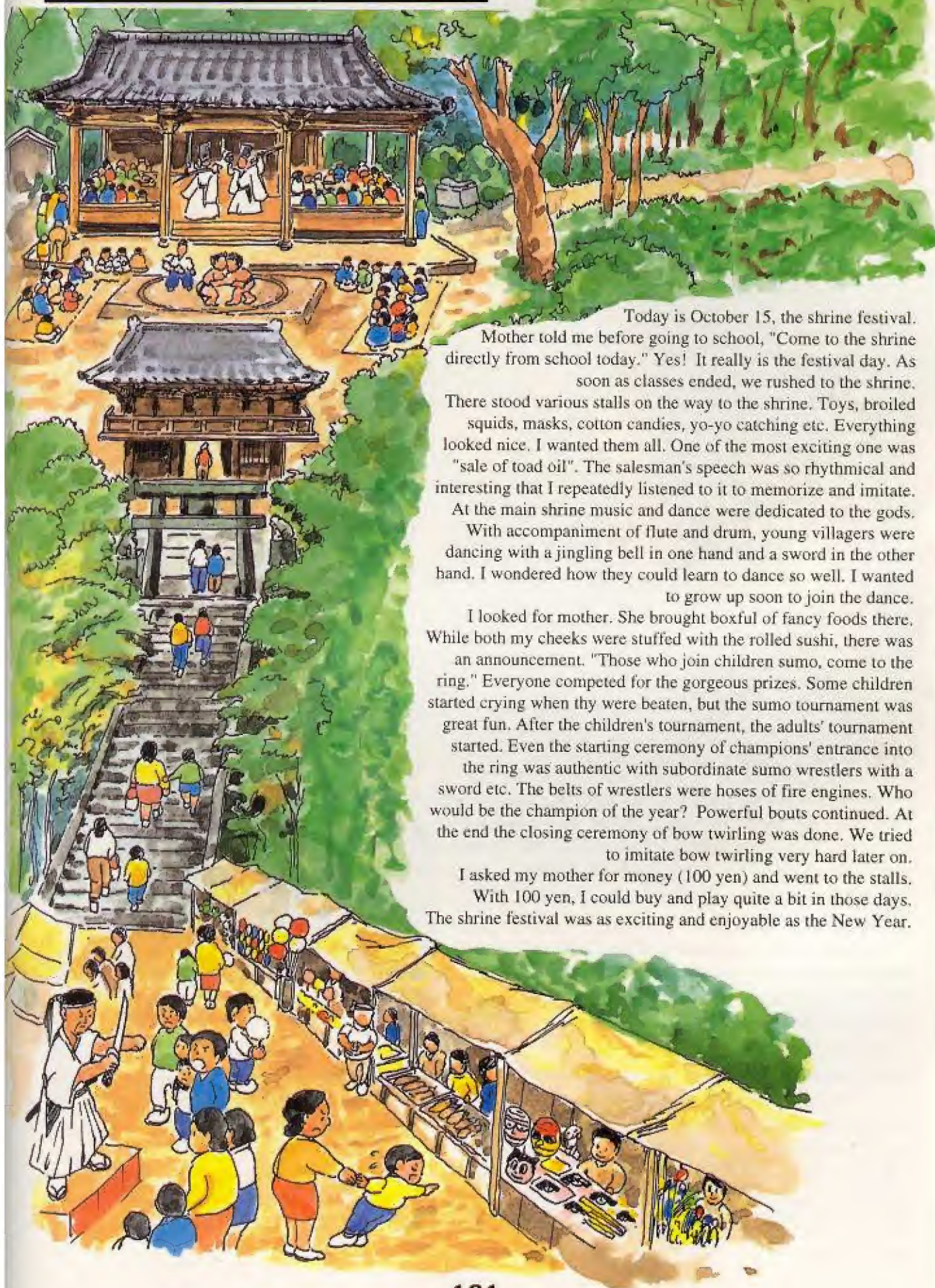


There must have been many more uses of straw. Every farmer stored a barnful of straw and used it up by the next harvest. Straw was valued during the whole year long. I loved to play in the straw barn. Upstairs, the barn was full of piled up straw. I made a secret hut, or jumped around as if on a trampoline. And I was scolded by mother. "I've told you again and again. Don't spoil the straw!"

I have countless memories of straw.

O-MIYA-MATSURI

(Shrine Festival)



Today is October 15, the shrine festival.

Mother told me before going to school, "Come to the shrine directly from school today." Yes! It really is the festival day. As

soon as classes ended, we rushed to the shrine.

There stood various stalls on the way to the shrine. Toys, broiled squids, masks, cotton candies, yo-yo catching etc. Everything looked nice. I wanted them all. One of the most exciting one was "sale of toad oil". The salesman's speech was so rhythmical and interesting that I repeatedly listened to it to memorize and imitate.

At the main shrine music and dance were dedicated to the gods.

With accompaniment of flute and drum, young villagers were dancing with a jingling bell in one hand and a sword in the other hand. I wondered how they could learn to dance so well. I wanted

to grow up soon to join the dance.

I looked for mother. She brought boxful of fancy foods there. While both my cheeks were stuffed with the rolled sushi, there was an announcement. "Those who join children sumo, come to the ring." Everyone competed for the gorgeous prizes. Some children started crying when they were beaten, but the sumo tournament was great fun. After the children's tournament, the adults' tournament started. Even the starting ceremony of champions' entrance into the ring was authentic with subordinate sumo wrestlers with a sword etc. The belts of wrestlers were hoses of fire engines. Who would be the champion of the year? Powerful bouts continued. At the end the closing ceremony of bow twirling was done. We tried

to imitate bow twirling very hard later on.

I asked my mother for money (100 yen) and went to the stalls.

With 100 yen, I could buy and play quite a bit in those days. The shrine festival was as exciting and enjoyable as the New Year.

ZA-KKA-TEN (Household Goods) (MI-SE) (Shop)



Near my house were two such shops, with a third on the long road going to school. Most of them had all sorts of goods, some had alcohol and cigarettes, the one near school had lots of stationery goods and so on. I think that they didn't sell fruit and vegetables because most houses grew their own. There was also very little beef and pork sold. Most of the fish sold were salt-dried, but sometimes they had unsalted fish. We hardly ever ate meat or raw fish, in fact if we did it was usually frozen red whale-meat or meat in a one-pot type of food such as curry etc.

Cleaning things such as HATAKI(duster), scrubbing brushes, brooms and dust-pans; washing things such as scrubbing boards, starch, pegs; kitchen things such as pots, knives, matches, chopsticks, plates... these were there as a matter of course. Also often squeezed in were nails, wire, hardware and field tools such as hoes.

For us these shops were overflowing with dreams. Delicious food: cakes, caramel with chance game prizes, bubble gum, chocolate, thrush eggs, bean paste buns, ice flakes with syrup and soda pop. Toys like model airplane kits, spinning tops, kites, flip-cards and marbles. Even fishing equipment; the place was full of things we wanted. Going home from school we would stand around looking at it all.

But it was forbidden to buy anything except school necessities on the way home from school. If another pupil told the teacher, it would mean running around the school grounds once, or being stood in the corridor. That is why we would often sneak in the back, buy and eat something, then go on home.

KU-JI-MO-NO (Lotteries)



MIZU-DASHI-KUJI
(Water Lottery)

We would buy lottery papers from the shop (Five or ten yen, depending on the rank) and when they were put in water characters would become visible. "Something-or-other prize!" meant you won what was written, but usually it was a consolation prize of one sweet or one stick of gum. The big prizes of balloons or toy pistols urged us on.



YABURI-TORI-KUJI
(Tear-out Lottery)

This kind of lottery was popular with sweetened bean lollipop or sugar candy. Over a wooden frame of squares thick paper was stretched. Tearing open the paper of one square, we would take out whatever was inside. If there was a small lollipop inside, that was that. In other words it was a consolation prize. If there was a paper with "Something-or other prize" written on it, you could receive it. There was also a type where you bought the smallest bag and would find a "something -or-other prize," which got bigger.



HIMO-HIKI-KUJI
(String Pulling Lottery)

Lots of strings are attached to various prizes. Some of the prizes were model planes and pistols worth a thousand yen, which could be bought with a ten yen lottery ticket. So if you were lucky, you won in a big way. From the bunch of strings we would choose one, and with a shout of "Ei! Win!" pull one. But it was always something like a stick of bubble gum. The shop owner would say "Here you are, a consolation prize," and give us a stick of the same kind of bubble gum, leaving the prize attached. They would then mix up the prizes so you couldn't tell which was which. Once when the shop keeper wasn't looking, I pulled the string from the prize end. My plan was to notice which string moved at the top, and remember it. But not one string at the top moved! Ever since then I never tried that lottery again. With the "tear out lottery" one time there were about five or six bags left, from first to third prize. "If I buy all the bags, then all the prizes are automatically mine, aren't they?" I said to the shop keeper and although I got a surly look, I took all of them home...

U-TSU-SHI-GAMI (Tatoos)

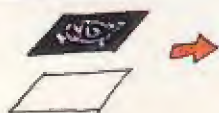
Various characters, flowers, birds etc. would be printed onto a sheet.

You can transfer them to where you want. Wet the back with water and rub gently. Peel the backing paper off. If it doesn't stick well, moisten it a little more, and try again. Putting it onto your skin often left dirty marks hard to get off, so I didn't do it very often.



NI-KKOH-SHA-SHIN (Sunshine Photos)

The negatives were sold in the shops, in sets.



If you put one negative with photo paper in the sunshine, for two or three minutes you would get a positive picture.

The black on the negative became white, and the white, black. But because we didn't have any holding liquid, after a while the whole picture went black.



NI-KKE-I GAMI (Sinamon Application Paper)

One paper cost about 1 yen.

It was a lottery with the prize written in the hinge part. If you win once, you were allowed to have another go. If I was lucky I would buy ten papers and have twenty to thirty wins.

If you lick it too much, the food coloring comes off and your tongue goes the same color.



HYAKU-REN-PATSU-JYU (100 Shots Running Pistol)

Little pellets of gunpowder are sandwiched between paper tapes.



You put the rolled up tape in a pistol specially made for this.



It only makes a bang, and no bullets come out. It was fun to play at cowboys and Indians.

MO- KEI-HI-KOH-KI (Model Airplanes)



At that time there was a big boom of model airplanes. Every boy had one or two, and made their own particular innovations, then had competitions for the longest or highest flying.

Most of us bought the kit and made them up, but among the older boys, sometimes someone would build one his own.

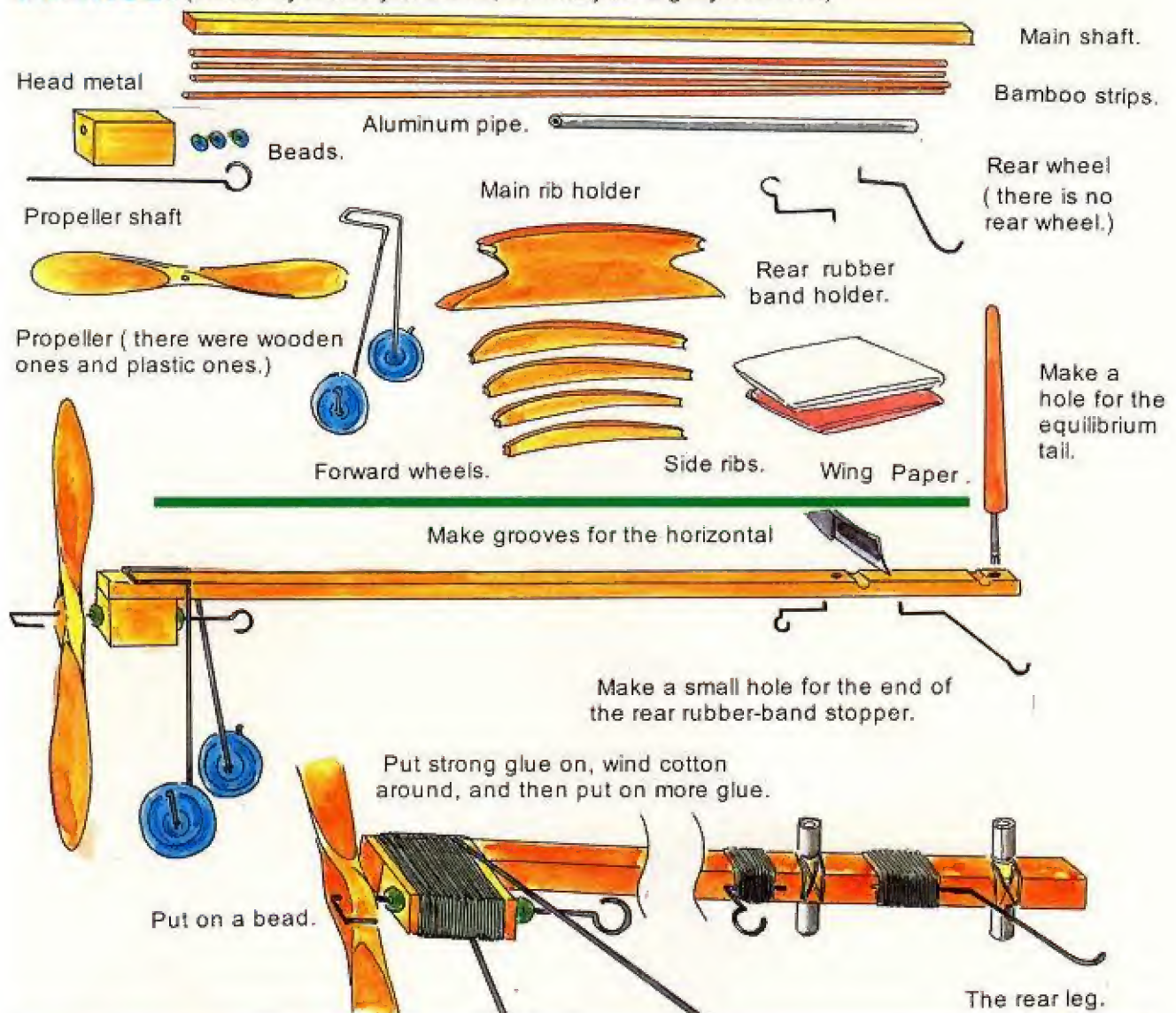
At that time there were various kits: Telmic A. B, Mach, Sky, Arrow, Sony, Hope and so on, I seem to remember.

Whenever the right season came after the rice had been harvested in autumn, I made Telmic E which was my favorite one. Then I went into the empty rice paddies and flew it.

At that time the handicraft program at school included making model airplanes for the whole school, and we had a big rally. We timed the flight times with a stop watch to decide the longest flying plane. I think we took the total or average of three flights. There were several prizes; for each grade, for pupils of the same grade, for each class, and so on. The prize was a certificate and several kits. I remember, when I was in the 5th or 6th grade, that I got a prize of a kit, although I wasn't first.

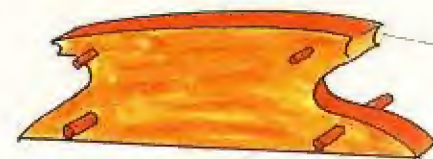
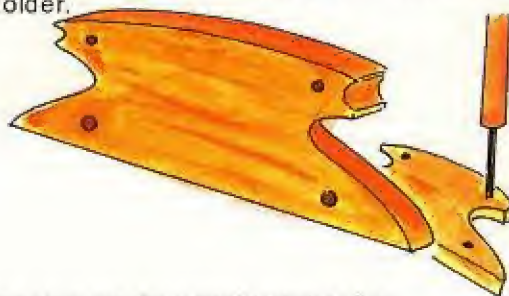
The empty rice paddies after harvest, and the airplanes humming around in the wide autumn sky
Fly high in the sky! Fly on!

METHOD: (This is my memory of the kit, so it may be slightly different.)



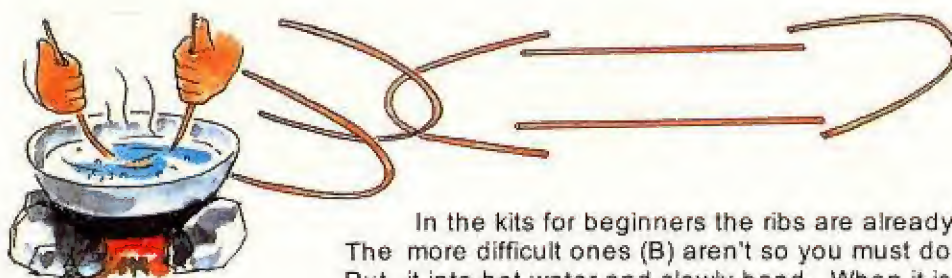
Make four holes in the main rib holder.

If you don't do it carefully it will split.



Put a thin bamboo strip through the holes.

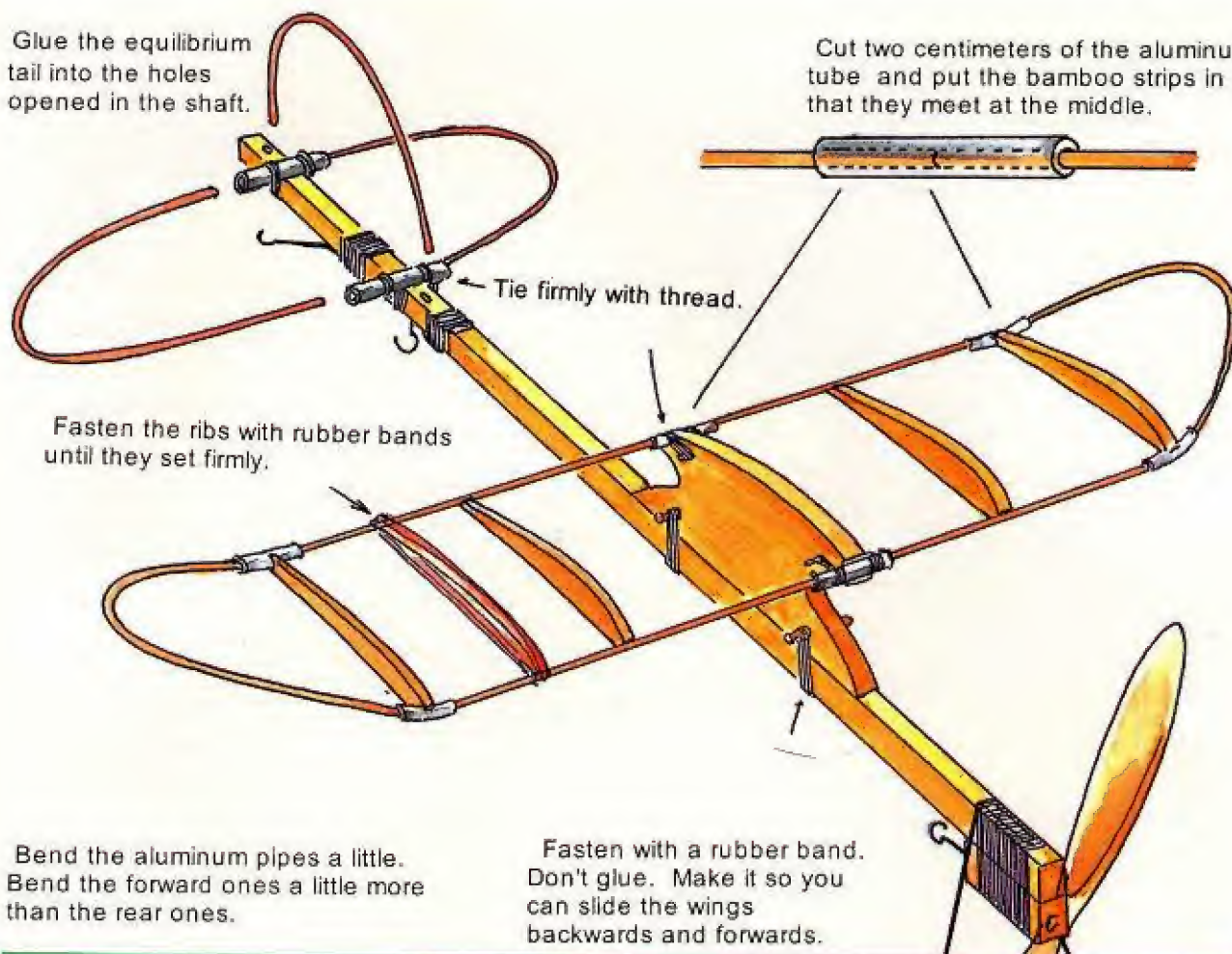
The two upper holes are for attaching the ribs, and the lower two are for attaching the rubber bands which hold the shaft to the main rib holder.



In the kits for beginners the ribs are already bent. The more difficult ones (B) aren't so you must do it yourself. Put it into hot water and slowly bend. When it is the right shape quickly plunge it into cold water to keep the shape.

Glue the equilibrium tail into the holes opened in the shaft.

Cut two centimeters of the aluminum tube and put the bamboo strips in so that they meet at the middle.



When you have the framework made you can paste on the special paper.

The paper which is left over should be cut before the glue dries, then pressed round the bamboo with your fingers. This is hard to do without making a mistake.



Fold over the extra paper.

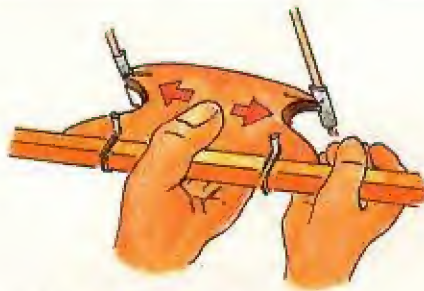
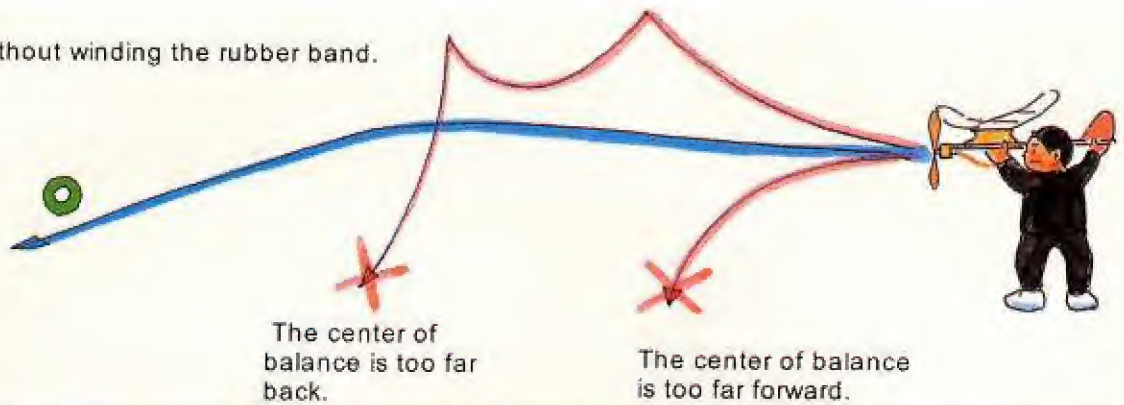
Spray water on the paper, but if you spray too much it will rip when it dries.



Don't try to hurry the drying but let it dry naturally. When the paper stretches, the plane is ready. For parts that aren't stretched properly you can spray just that part again.

Test fly without winding the rubber band.

Perfect.



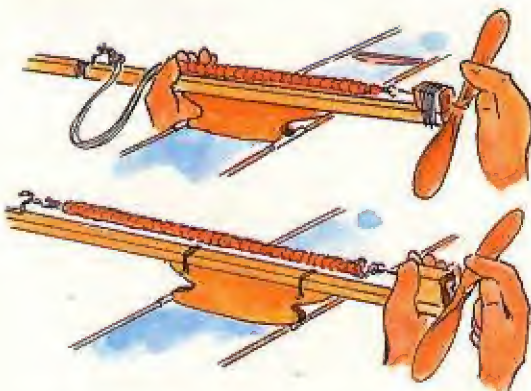
Adjusting the center of balance.



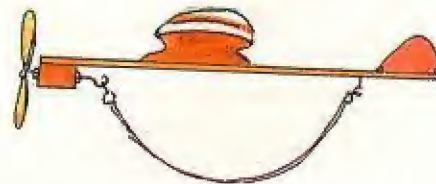
If it veers to the right or left, you can correct it by bending the aluminum pipe. Bend the opposite side it veers to. Another way is to do as in the picture and add a weight (the sun of the Japanese flag, for instance) to the opposite wing that it veers to.

WINDING THE BAND.

When winding it alone.



Get a friend to hold the rear end of the band, or use a branch or nail to hold it. When the band is completely twisted hook it onto the band holder.



Carelessly letting go is dangerous.

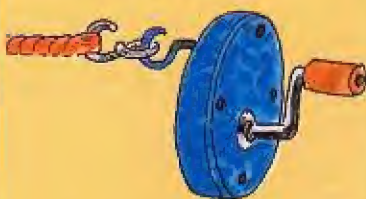


The band twisted two or three times.



Attaching an "S" shaped hook prevents the band from snapping.

GRINDER A handy tool which turns something five turns with one turn of the handle. A speedy way to wind up the band.



Being expensive (about 500 yen) only a few people had one. I didn't have one.

Use soapy water to help lengthen the life of the band.



How to fly it. With one hand hold the propeller and with the other hand hold the back part of the plane.

Let go of the propeller and when it moves by itself give it a gentle push. It is not good to throw it strongly.



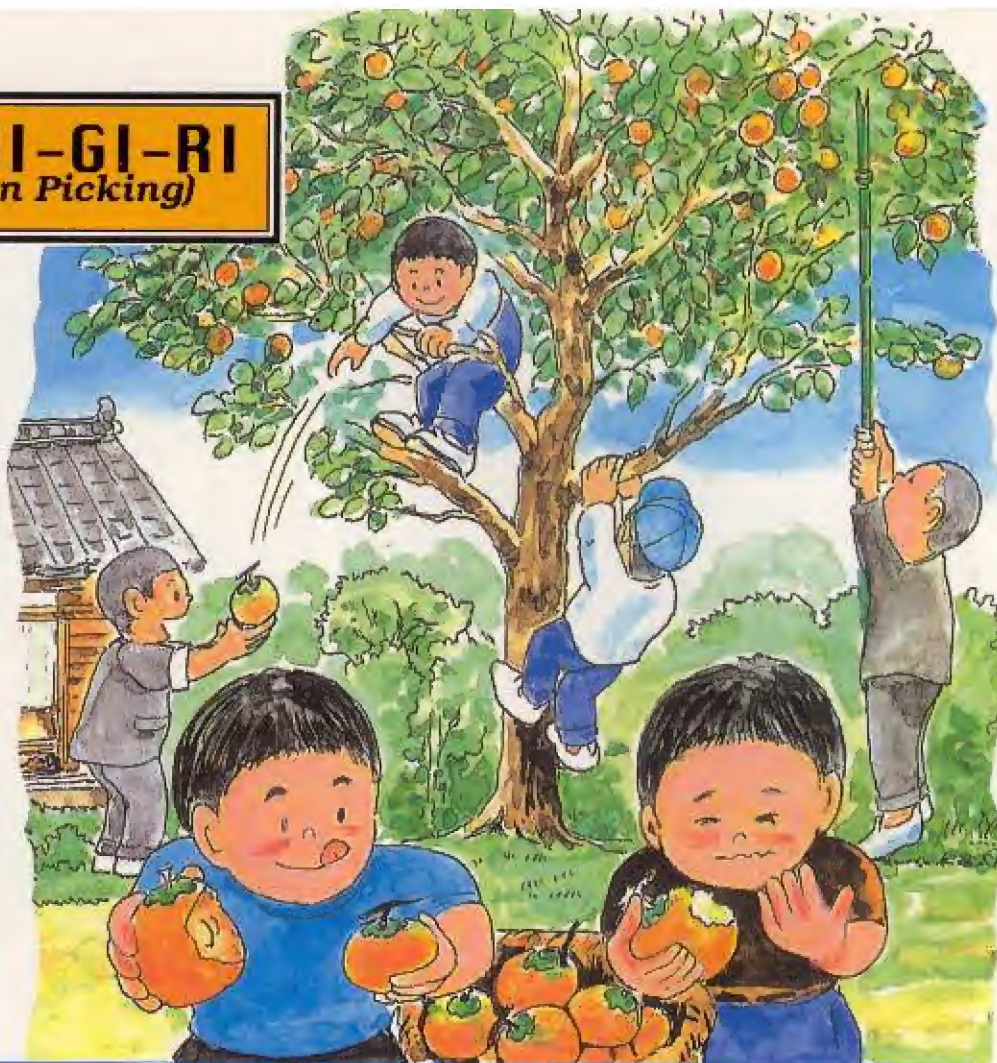
KAKI-CHI-GI-RI

(Persimmon Picking)

The end of September is the time the persimmons are almost sweet. The last of the cicadas finish chirping at this time.

Some said that the "sesame like pattern of the persimmon" which is a sign of sweetness, are the droppings of the cicadas.

Many different species of persimmons allow us to eat them from September till the New Year, the last being the "KO-HARU (small spring)" variety.



GA-SSO

(Persimmon Picker)



This picker uses thin bamboo. Smaller and shorter trees present no problem but tall trees need a picking tool.



To stop it splitting further tie it with rope or wire.

Pick a bamboo the same thickness at top and bottom. Cut into a neat (V) shape so that the persimmon tree branches slide into it and get caught.

HOW TO PICK.



Choose your persimmon. **Push** sharply upwards to pinch the branch.



Twist from side to side to break the branch.



Insert something bigger than the persimmon branch, to loosen it.

To be able to use bitter persimmons for dried fruit they must have the branch attached. (to make entry next page.)

TSU-RU-SHI-GAKI

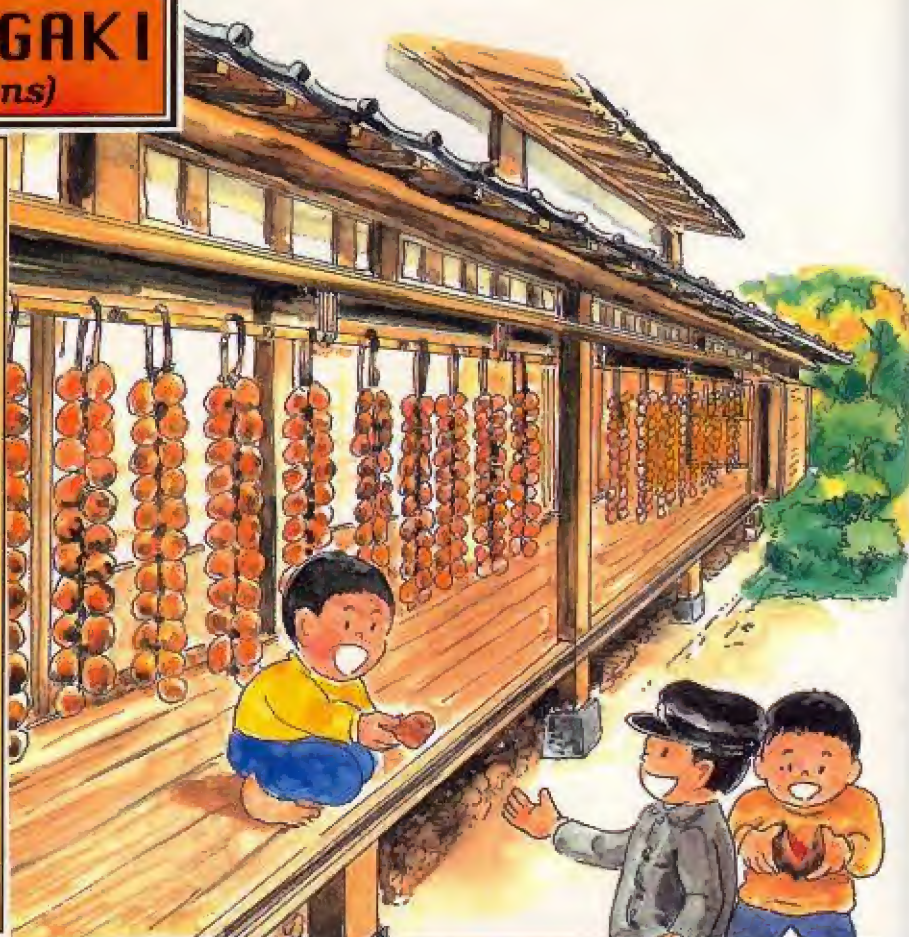
(Dried Persimmons)

"Hanging persimmons" is what we called dried persimmons. These are made by taking bitter persimmons, peeling them and hanging them up under the eaves. They become sweet and are preserved food.

There were even many farm houses that made enough to take to market to sell. In my house we usually only made enough for ourselves. Coming home from school I would often have some as a snack. During the long autumn evenings while watching television, it was always dried persimmons that our hands reached out for.

"If you eat them before they're even ready, they'll never get done!"

I was scolded.



Before they are too ripe, pick them with a little of the branch still attached.



Cut the branches so there is just a good (T) shape left.



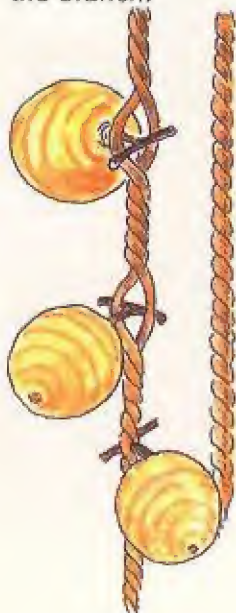
Carefully take the leaves off.



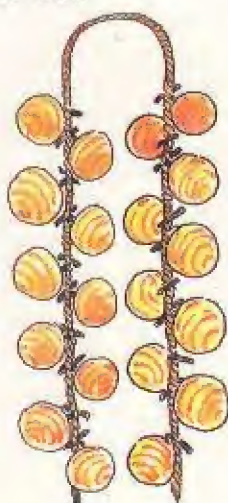
Peel as thin as possible. It is best going round.



Loosening the rope twine, insert the branch.



Leaving a spare space in the middle, hang about ten on either side.



When they get a little soft, gently squeeze them.



At this stage they also taste good. They should be squeezed into a flat shape.



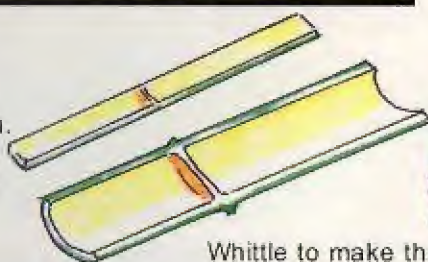
After drying some more, a fine white powder will appear.



After about a month **delicious dried persimmon** are ready. Keep them in a can, and they are preserved food.

TAKE-BERA-KAWA-MU-KI (Bamboo Skin Peeler)

Choose bamboo that is a little thick. As in the picture, make it into a spatula. It is better not to use new bamboo for this; find some that is a little old.



Whittle to make the end bend.



Be careful not to make it too weak.

HOW TO PEEL.

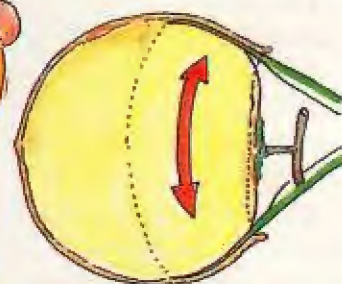
Peel the first ring with a knife.



Insert the bamboo blades.



While turning the persimmon around push the blades in deeper and deeper



Using the suppleness of the bamboo, it separates the skin and the flesh of the apple.



Move it from right to left, to peel.



To finish take off the [cap] that has been peeled.



I used to be able to peel a persimmon in less than 30 seconds by this method. Compared to a knife the peeling is much thinner, and the peeled persimmon is very neat, and excellent for dried persimmons.

AO-SHI-GAKI (Unripe Bitter Persimmon)



This is the method for treating persimmons which are very bitter, in their not yet ripe state.

In a big pot (There used to be big wood stoves outside, about big enough to bath a baby in, which seemed to be used for making konnyaku (vegetable jelly) and tofu) put in straw and water and heat it to 34 to 35 degrees. Put in the persimmons and keep it simmering very gently for one or two days. The straw acts on it to take out the bitterness. As the persimmon looks exactly like a bitter persimmon, I would skite to friends that I could eat bitter persimmons and try to trick them. But as people made them here and there, my friends soon caught on to the trick.

I've also heard of taking out the bitterness by making persimmon pickle in **strong spirits** , but I don't know how it was done.

CHI-KA-KA-KU-RE-GA

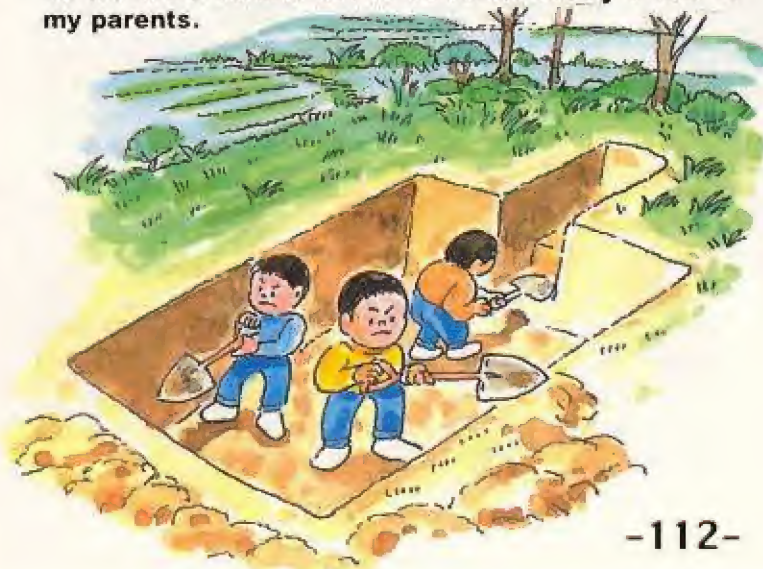
(Underground Hide-Out)

As well as tree hide-outs we also made underground hide outs.

By the mountain at the back of my place, we secretly made one. There we played battlelike games. Suddenly disappearing into what looked like an ordinary field was great fun.



We knew that, if we were found, we would be scolded, and that would be the end of our hide-out, so we were careful not to be found out by either of my parents.

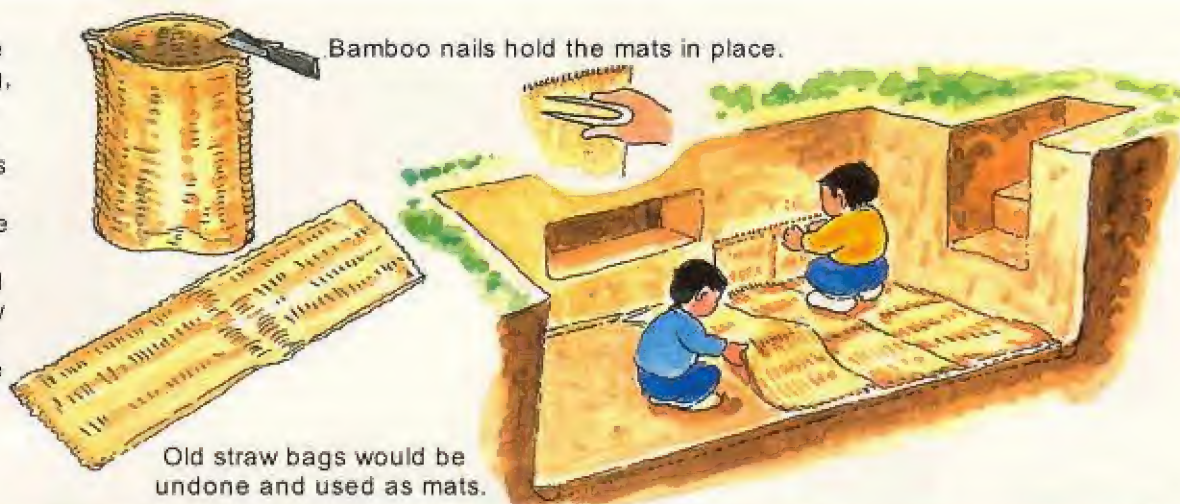


While they were both at work in the fields, two or three friends would come help with the digging. We made it deep enough to be able to stand and walk inside.

Two or three steps make the entrance way. To prevent the rain coming in, we dug around it.



Once the hole is dug, the inside is made. Straw mats are put against the walls, straw, and then straw mats are laid on the floor.



Old straw bags would be undone and used as mats.

Bamboo nails hold the mats in place.

Once the interior is done, the ceiling is made with [mohso] bamboo. It is best to have so many there are hardly any gaps.

Use big strong bamboo so that even with a layer of earth and someone standing on it, it doesn't become a pitfall.



If there are still gaps, put planks or bits of sheets of tin on it. On top of that put agricultural plastic sheeting.



This plastic sheeting is the kind used for strawberries, melon and water-melon, and we would use sheets that couldn't be used in the fields any more.

The earth that has been dug out is put on top. While doing this, the bamboo air pipes and periscope are embedded. Don't put too much earth on, or the roof might collapse. At the end put grass with its roots, on top to make it look more natural.

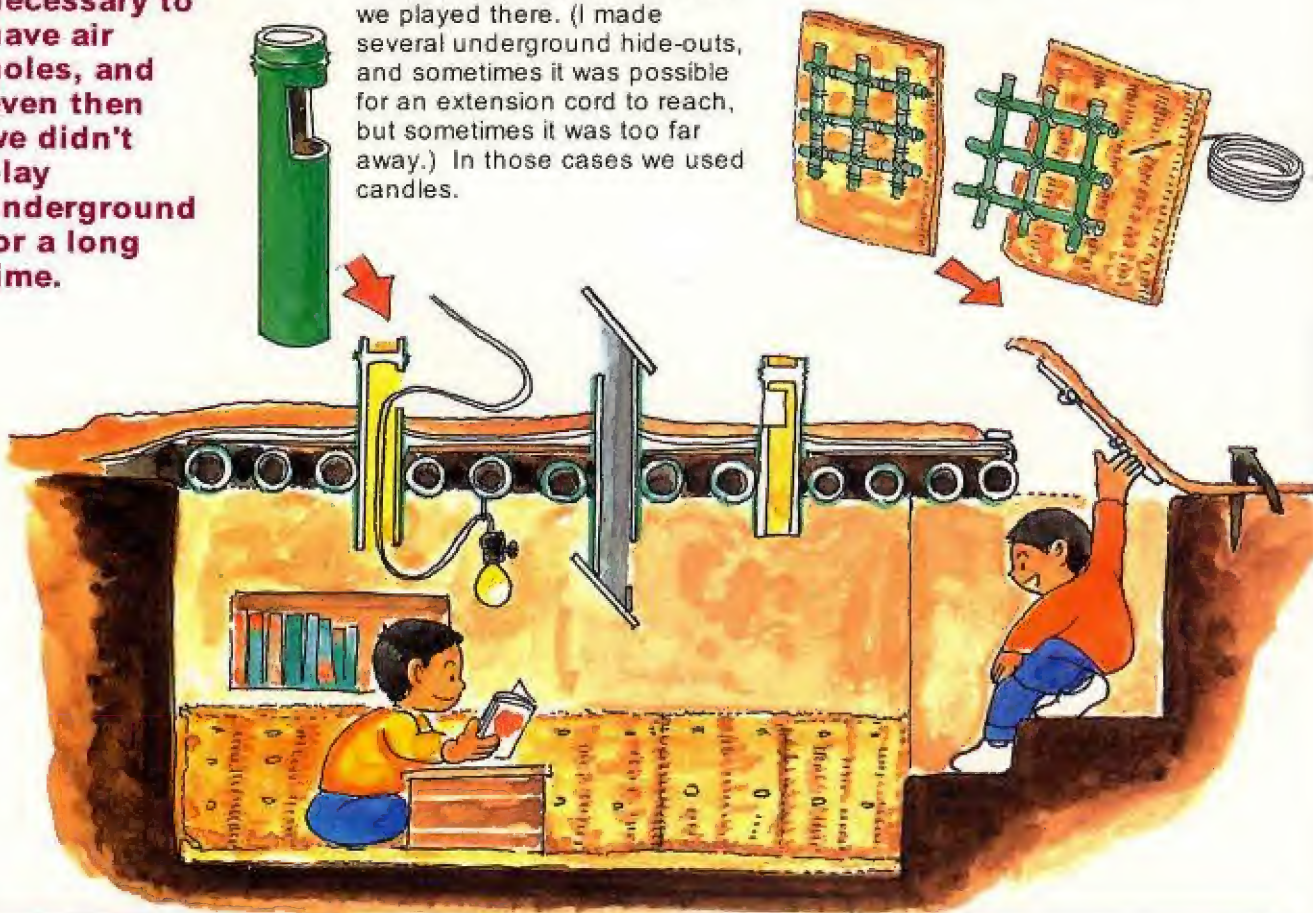


Camouflage it with grass, so nobody can find it.

It is absolutely necessary to have air holes, and even then we didn't play underground for a long time.

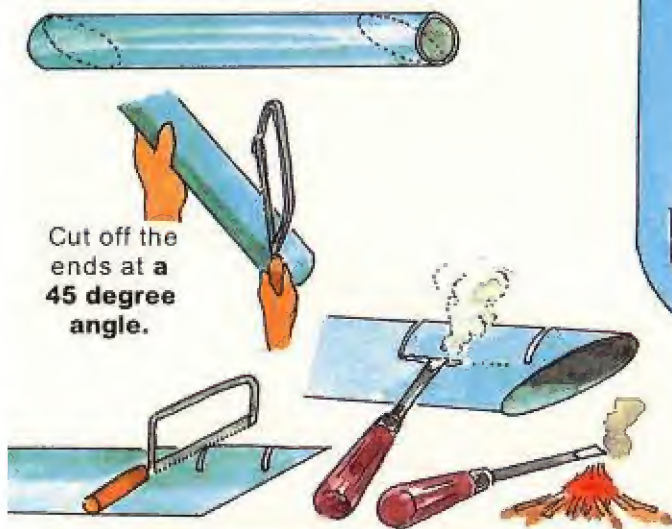
If it was near enough to use an extension cord or cord drum, we would do that just for the times we played there. (I made several underground hide-outs, and sometimes it was possible for an extension cord to reach, but sometimes it was too far away.) In those cases we used candles.

The entrance **hatch** is made of bamboo and straw matting.



SEN-BOH-KYO
(Periscope)

Use a plastic pipe such as those used for agricultural water pipes.



Put in mirrors at top and bottom. We found mirrors in the rubbish. With a glass cutter cut it to the right shape. If you don't have a glass cutter you can try putting the mirror into water, and cutting it with scissors. I did this many times, but failed quite a few times. But you can usually get it to a usable size. As it doesn't have a lens, you can only see a little bit at a time. The shorter the pipe, the better you can see.

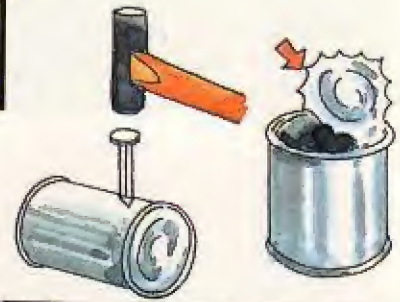
However you can tell when someone is approaching. I remember making several periscopes. For games like "kick the can" and hide and seek we also used them.

My "underground hide-outs" were sometimes found by my father, and I was forced to fill it in again, but I still made more. What was fun about this was that it was an extension of bomb shelter games. At the back of our village was a hill with several bomb shelters which had been dug out about the time of the Pacific war. With my friends we would often take candles and play there. But there was something scary about them and we seldom played there alone. I think that is why we wanted our own underground space, near home.

A-KI-KAN-POK-KU-RI (Empty Can Clogs)



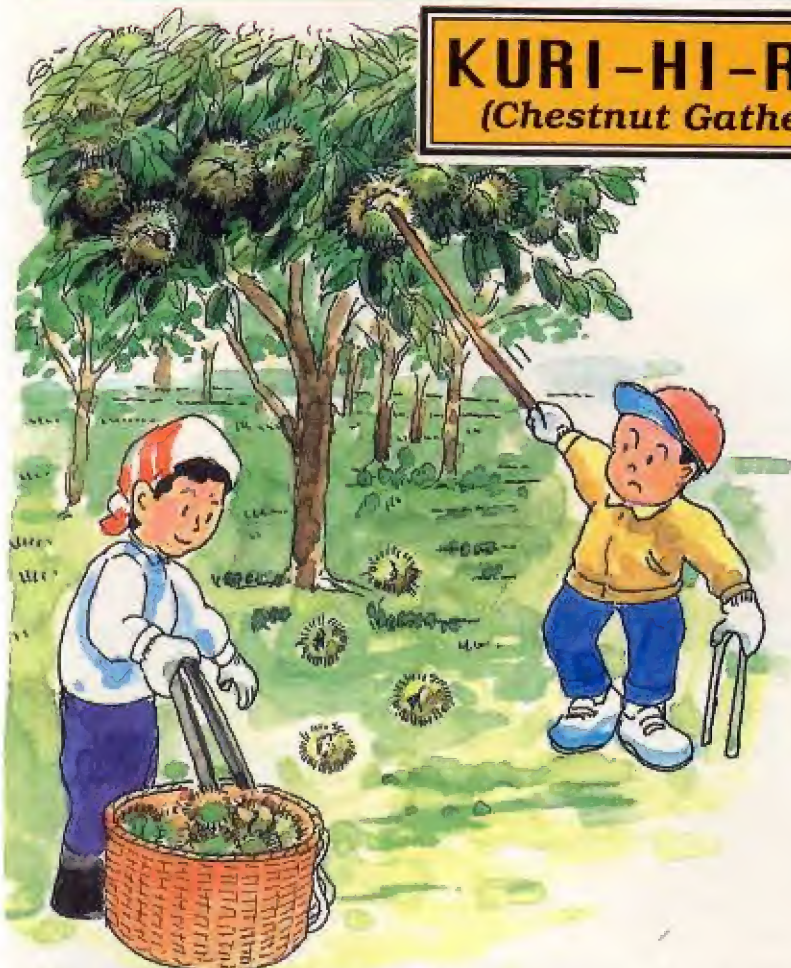
Cut off the remaining lid (top) of cans.



Make holes with a nail at both ends near the bottom.



Get wire through the holes to make hoops for pulling ropes. Attach ropes of suitable length.



KURI-HI-RO-I (Chestnut Gathering)

When you take off burrs, it's better with rubber boots on.

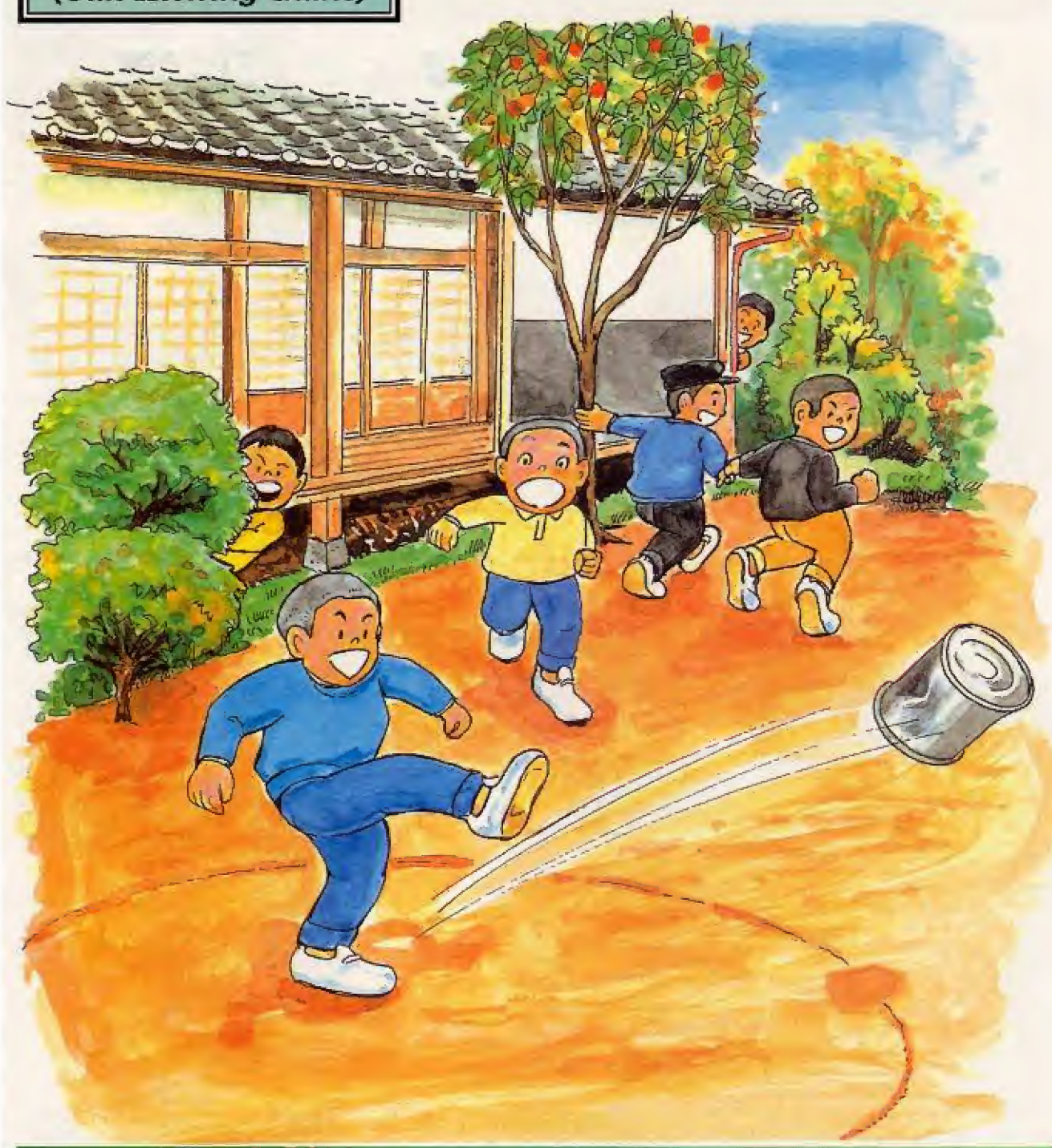


My family owned a few hills of chestnut trees. In autumn, when burrs started to open up, we gathered the chestnuts in baskets.

Back home at the yard we took off burrs and sent them to markets.

KA-N-KE-RI

(Can Kicking Game)



Kahhnn! Kick-off!

Several boys got together and often started the can kicking game. It makes me wonder why we so often played the game. It didn't need complicated rules or sophisticated techniques. The point was the first "ONI" ("it" a sort of victim character of the game) had to serve as "ONI" quite a long time. So I think it might have been a kind of teasing or bullying game. There was no particular target of bullying, but someone had to be picked on. If another person became "ONI", everyone gave up easily. But the "victim" of the day became "ONI" and everyone hid very hard and try to help each other to keep "him" ONI forever! The worst case was one "ONI" who served for hours and ended up crying.

I, myself, sometimes became the victim, so I guess, that was just the way it was. Next time, another person was picked on and I joined in the teasing group. This game had no seniors or juniors with the same rules for all kids either strong or weak. So we could vent our anger openly. Also the pleasure of kicking off the can with all our might would be the best part of the game.

Rules of Can Kicking Game

The first "ONI" is the one who loses in jan-ken (scissors-paper-stone) game. Draw a circle of 4 meters in diameter and put a can in the center. The game is started with a kick-off by someone other than "ONI".



While the "ONI" goes and finds the can, everyone hides away. The "ONI" puts the can in the center again and goes out of circle.



The "ONI" tries to find everyone. At the beginning the "ONI" has no prisoners, so he must dare to find someone. But if he goes too far, someone might kick the can and make the game start again. Be careful of the can.

If the "ONI" finds someone, even a part such as a foot, a hand, or clothing, he should call his name (or nickname) exactly, which means the "ONI" has discovered him. Kids sometimes exchange caps or clothing to confuse the "ONI".



After calling the name, the "ONI" returns quickly to the circle and steps on the can and wins one. If he names wrongly and steps on the can, someone kicks the can and starts it over again. The "ONI" can correct naming before kicking the can.

The discovered kids are prisoned to a tree beside the circle, hand in hand. When the "ONI" finds everyone, the game is over, and the first one discovered will be the next "ONI".



Actually the game doesn't end so smoothly. Someone always appears from somewhere and kicks the can. Prisoners also confuse the "ONI" by pretending to talk to hidden friends, but in a completely different places from where they really are. The "ONI" only believes in himself and tries to search them out. But someone sneaks in from behind and KAHHHN!!



Everyone runs away and after all his efforts the poor "ONI" has to start again! It's hard to look at him picking up the can in disappointment.

ANA-I-RE (Rolling Ball into Dents)

This game is played with a soft tennis ball. Make as many holes as the number of members. Holes are made shallow and close together. Draw a starting line for rolling, 2 meters away from the holes, and draw boundary lines, too.



Play janken (scissors-paper-stone) to decide the players order, then, in that order, choose your hole.



Roll a ball towards the holes. Three tries without getting in is "1 loss", and it's the turn of the next player. The other players must have some part of their body inside the boundary lines.



Wait until the ball is still. When it stays in a hole, the owner of the hole catches the ball quickly, and the other players should run away because he throws it at them!



If a player is hit without rebound, he gets "1 loss". Even a part of body or clothing would be recognized as "1 loss" if a third person agrees it happened. If he catches the thrown ball directly, the pitcher gets "1 loss". If he fails to catch, he gets "1 loss". Success in catching erases "1 loss". If the pitcher cannot hit anybody, he gets "1 loss".



The number of losses is counted with **the buttons of school uniforms undone one by one** ! The players not in uniform draw the losses on the ground. Five is the maximum number of losses. The player with 5 losses withdraws from the game, flattens his hole (lightly since he can come back next session) and waits for "punishment".

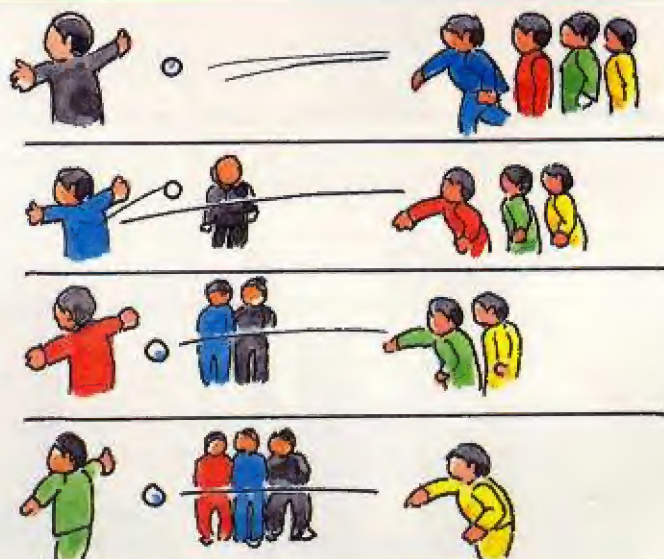


Other losses:

- 1 Since the holes are close together and shallow, it is not easy to guess in which hole the ball finally gets in. If you run away and the ball doesn't get in any hole, you get one loss.
- 2 Successful catch of the ball erases 1 loss and makes 1 saving if you have no losses.
- 3 Good pitchers choose the holes which are likely to receive the ball, and aim at their own holes. Others should do the opposite.
- 4 Players with 5 losses should retire one by one and the last person left is the winner.

Punishment (Death Penalty)

Punishment is the final ceremony of the game. The first loser is hit with a ball 5 meters away by the others. The second one is hit by all, except by the first, etc. It is not too painful but it is quite humiliating. The winner can throw at all the other players. After this ceremony the game starts again by choosing the holes.



TAKE-TO-N-BO (Bamboo Helicopter)

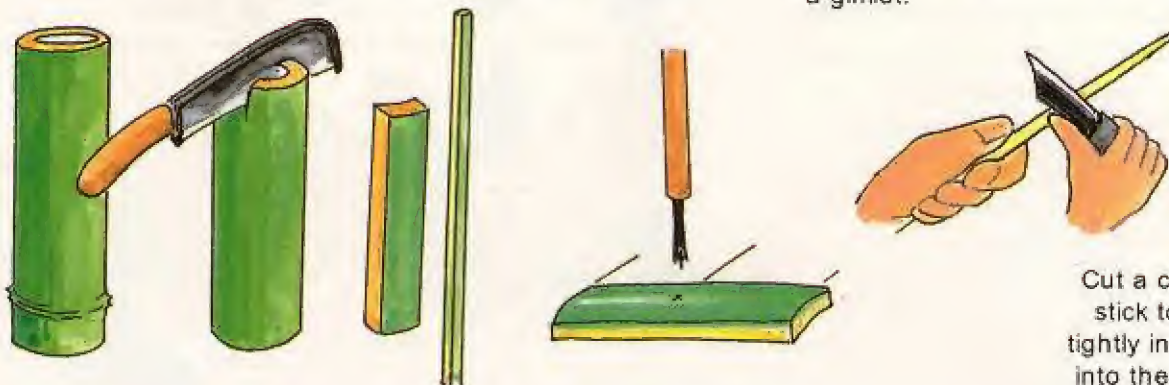


It was too simple a craft work for the boys in those days and we didn't make it so often. In the beginning it was fun though.

The bamboo should be a rather thick one.

15 cm length for a propeller blade.
20 cm length for a center stick.

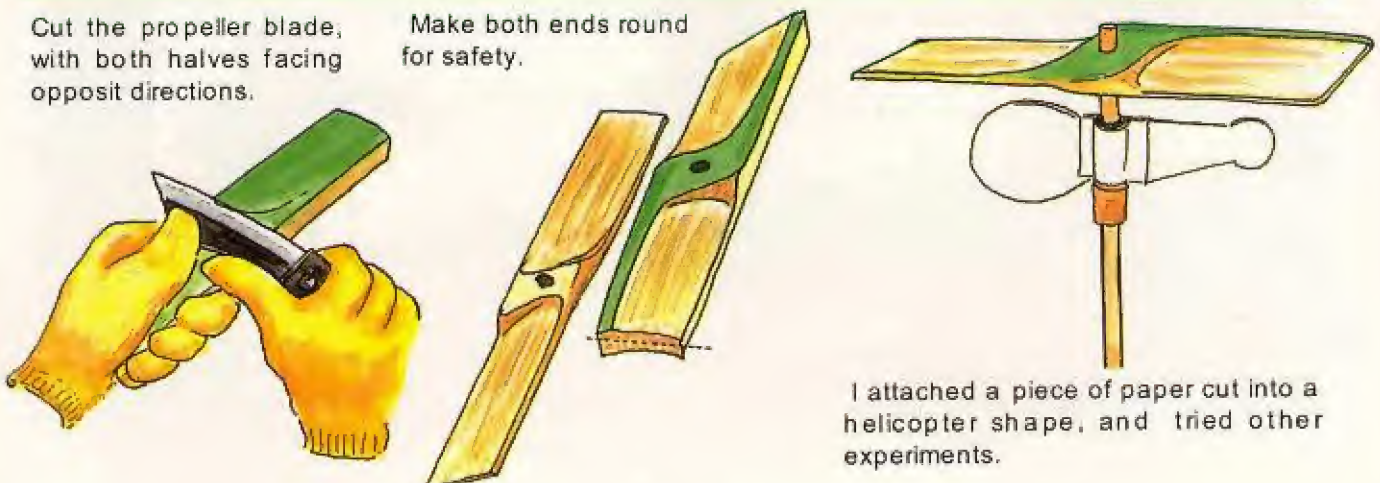
Make a hole right in the middle of propeller blade from outer side with a gimlet.



Cut a center stick to be tightly inserted into the hole.

Cut the propeller blade, with both halves facing opposite directions.

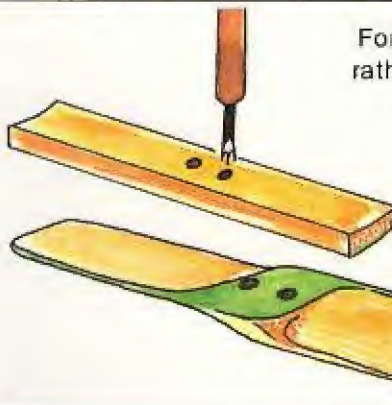
Make both ends round for safety.



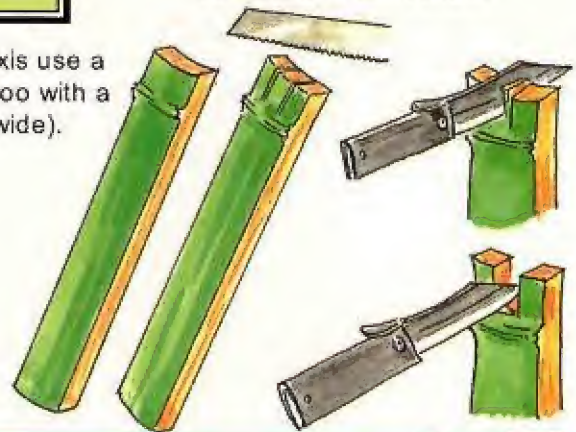
I attached a piece of paper cut into a helicopter shape, and tried other experiments.

TAKE-TO-N-BO (*Bamboo Helicopter II*) (Only The Propeller Blade Flies Away)

Make 2 holes 1 cm apart in the middle of the propeller blade and carve both sides.

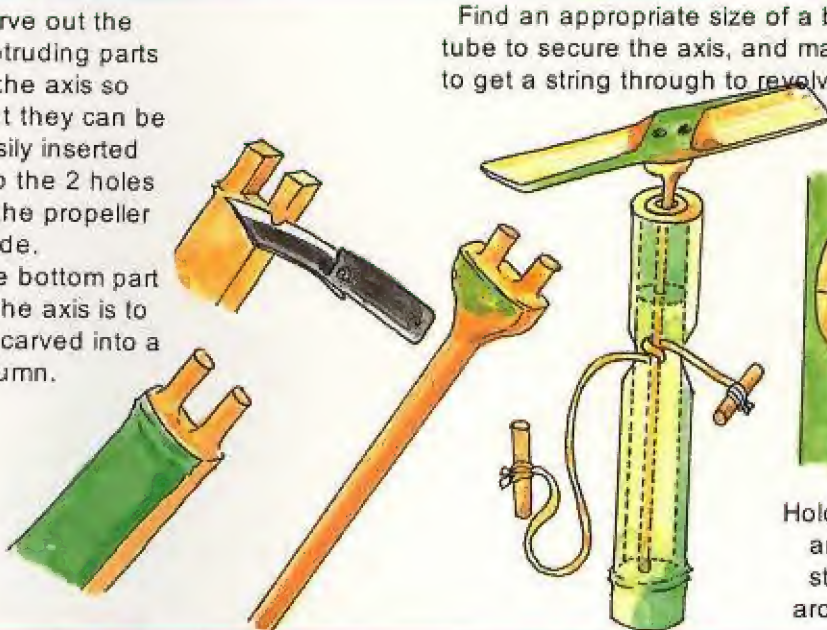


For a revolving axis use a rather thick bamboo with a joint (14 mm wide).



Make notches 6-7 mm apart with a saw, and cut out the center part with a knife.

Carve out the protruding parts of the axis so that they can be easily inserted into the 2 holes of the propeller blade. The bottom part of the axis is to be carved into a column.



Find an appropriate size of a bamboo tube to secure the axis, and make 2 holes to get a string through to revolve the axis.



Hold the tube and string in one hand and pull the other end of the string strongly. The propeller blade turns around and flies away from the axis.

PARACHUTING

Cut a plastic bag into an umbrella shape.



Sew on 10 threads of the same length.

Attach a weight. Too light a weight doesn't open the parachute and too heavy one brings it down too soon.

Wrap the weight with the parachute and throw it up as high as possible.



It opens up and comes down slowly. It was a simple game, but I made it quite often, maybe influenced by war movies in those days.



BU-U-ME-RA-N

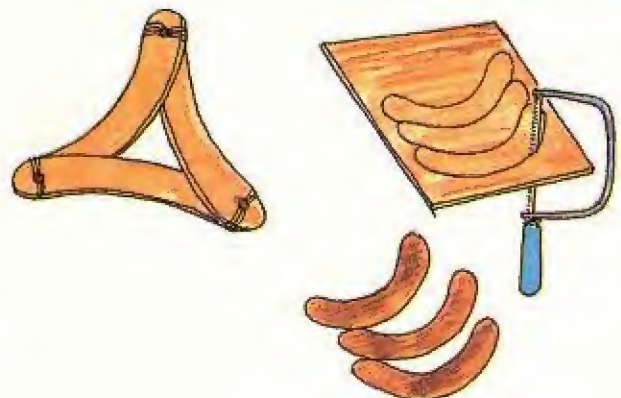
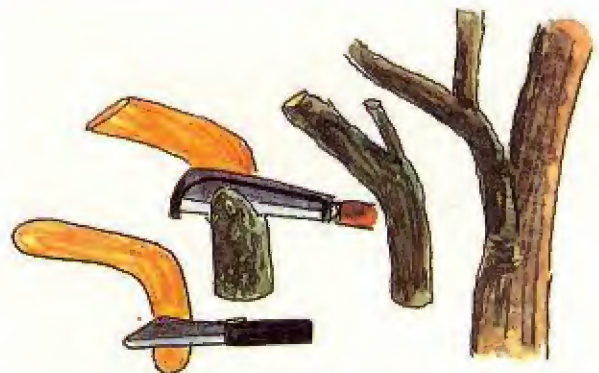
(BOOMERANG)



Throwing, revolving around quickly, and returning to you---That is "boomerang".

Actually it didn't come back as I expected. I made various experiments. Boys magazines those days didn't mention the exact angle etc. Repeated attempts turned out in vain. Maybe the key to success is how to throw it, I thought, and I tried and tried. And with all the efforts, some tries brought back the boomerang. I wanted to show my skill. In front of my friends, I threw it and it happened to come back to my feet! Cheers!

Sometimes it went away far into the hill and then everyone made fun of me. Still I tried another style. My ideal image was the flying boomerang catching a persimmon and returning to my hand. But even after so many attempts, **it never came back to my HAND.**



SHII-TAKE (Shiitake-mushroom)



My family had a shiitake-mushroom farm.

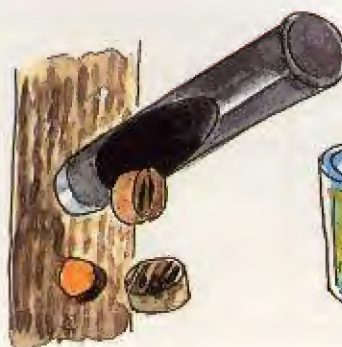
In season shiitake grew larger day by day. We cut and packed them to send to the markets.

Cut oak trees into a certain length and make holes of 1 cm in diameter with a metal punch.



The round barks of oak are punched out when hit successively.

My parents seemed to buy fungi cultured in sawdust, but before that they hammered in pegs with cultured fungi.



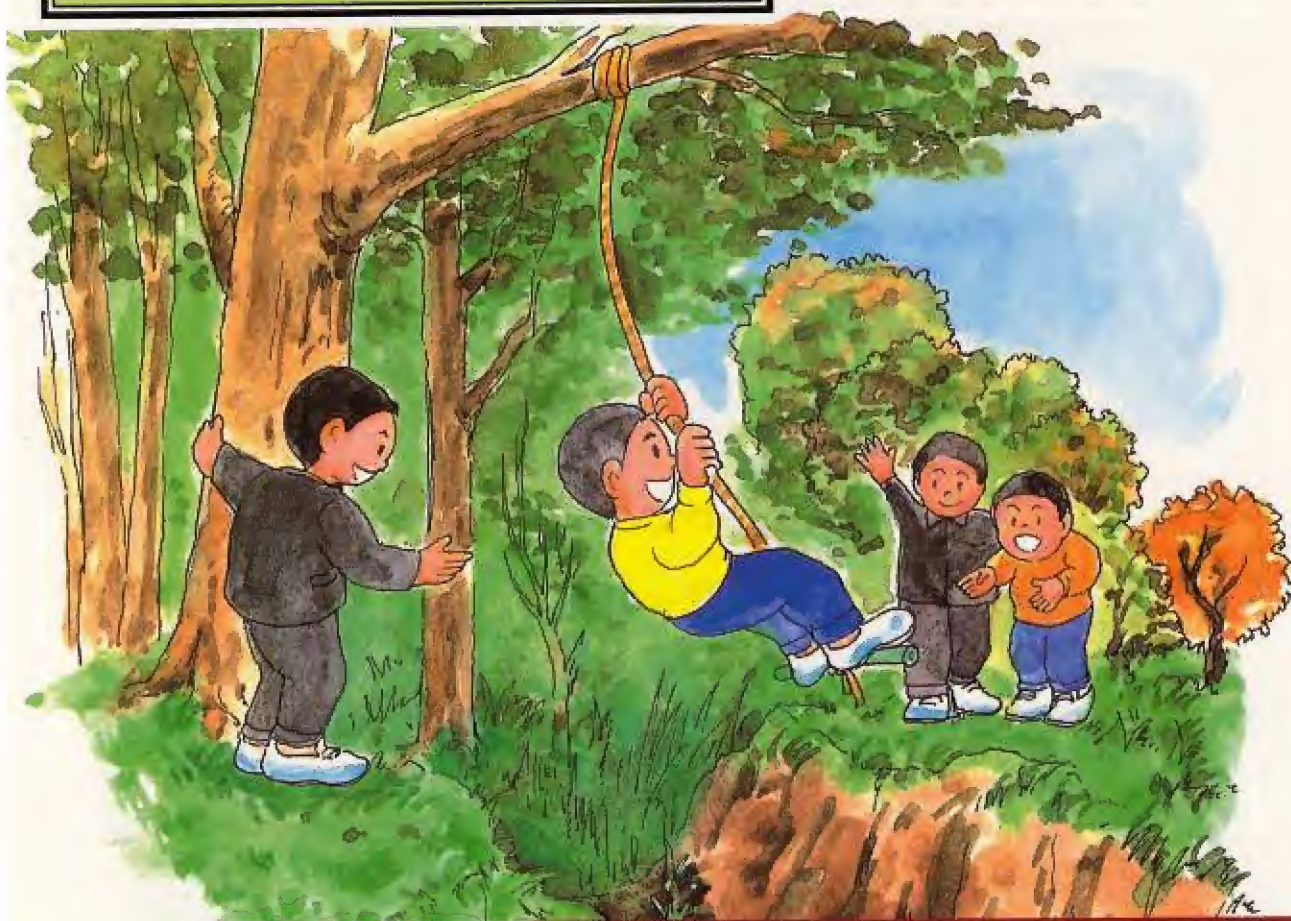
Put a pinch of sawdust with fungi into the holes.



Cap back the holes with the round barks and hammer them lightly. Stand the trees in shady places like in a cedar wood. My parents also grew shiitake in a greenhouse later on.



TA-A-ZA-N-GO-K-KO (Tarzan Make-Believe)



'Tarzan make-believe'

was one of the countless 'plays in the hill. We played a lot in hills from late autumn to winter, when there was no fear of mosquitoes and vipers, while we could enjoy plentiful fruits and nuts. Running around the hills and fields, we got comfortably warmed up and it was really a fun never to be stopped. One of the common plays was "Moving on tree-tops, Ninja style." We climbed up a tree and swayed it with our weight until we could reach and move onto the next tree. How far we could move 'without landing ?' We played in screams and shrieks.

In 'Tarzan make-believe' we hung a rope to a thrilling point and tried our courage. We jumped over with a war cry of Tarzan, "Ah-ah-ah."

When we found a good vine, we used it. We made natural 'field athletic courses' here and there.

SHI-I-NO-MI-HI-RO-I (Gathering Sweet Acorns)

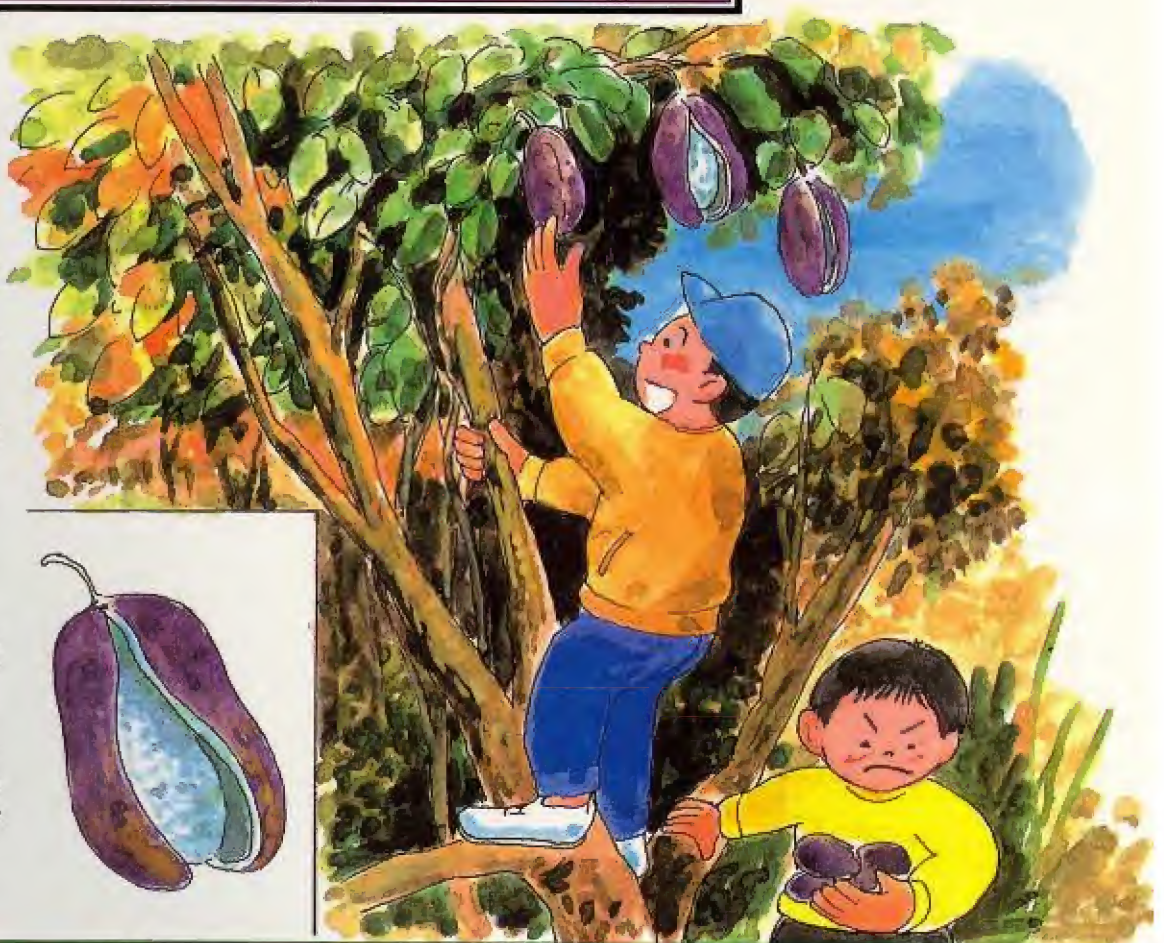


Another enjoyment of plays in hills was gathering sweet acorns. We found blackish brown nuts of soy-bean-size under big pasania trees. On lucky days we found 2--3 kg each. We cracked the shells in our mouths and ate the inside raw, or brought them home to roast in a frying pan. It smelled and tasted very good.



A-KE-BI-TO-RI (*Akebi Gathering*)

Akebi is a representative fruit in hills of autumn. It is a kind of vine plant. But I couldn't find one so easily in the hills of my hometown (village). It was a rather precious wild fruit of rare value. You were a lucky person if you could eat 3 or 4 fruits during the season.



So when we found some unripe akebi, we put our 'spit' on them. It was a symbolic action to insist that something belonged to you. And the place should be kept secret. When someone might come closer, you had to confess that you had found them and already put spit on them. He gave up. It is ready to eat when it turns reddish purple and has a little crack on the surface. We went to crop them only with the closest friends. Then we returned to the playground to show off proudly. "Where did you find them?" asked the boys enviously. "We can't tell you," we answered in a triumphant manner.

There was a fruit similar to Akebi, called **Mube**. Some family had a Mube tree, so it didn't attract boys in taste and rarity. Both Akebi and Mube had little meat actually, so sweet juice around seeds was the only good part.

We chewed the inside of the fruit and spat away the seeds. The hill in autumn is full of wonderful tastes.

Pomegranate

is another savor of autumn. I ate it often. It was not grown naturally.

It was usually planted in gardens, and I had one in my garden. I waited for the fruits getting ripe gradually.



We also had a pear tree in our garden. When the fruits got big enough, we covered them with paper and waited till they became ripe.



ME-JI-RO-O-TO-SHI (Japanese White-Eye Hunting)

Today the white-eye is one of the protected birds and hunting is regulated. When I was a child, however, keeping white-eyes was such a popular hobby that, from the smallest elementary school kids to adults, we had at least one in our house.



White-eye hunting; a good call bird, bait such as ripe persimmons or tangerine, water (a little), bird lime, a black sock...



Wear dark clothing so as not to be remarkable. Leave for a wood (of various trees) early in the morning in cold seasons with tools and a call bird, which should be covered with a cloth so that it would not chirp before setting.



We found many white-eyes in thick wood of various trees of different size, such as oaks and pasanias etc. Choose the place for setting the trap, cut a twig of your height and hang the nest of a call bird. Uncover the cloth after all the preparations are finished as quickly and silently as possible.



Cut a newly sprouting twig as a trap, and remove all the leaves except a few at the end. (To make birds believe it to be a real branch.)



Wet the twig with water so that the bird-lime can be separated easily. Keep the bird-lime in a small bottle such as a cosmetic container, with a little water at the bottom.



Knead and soften the bird-lime if it is too hard on chilly days.

Roll the twig and wind the bird-lime around it evenly.



Put a few twigs with bird-lime, as if they were natural branches, as high as you can easily reach. Set the baits near the twigs.



Uncover the cloth on the call bird. The call bird finds itself in the woods and starts chirping.

Hide in the place where you can see the trap and can immediately get to seize a trapped bird.



Attracted by the call bird, other white-eyes came near for either rescue or struggle over territory.

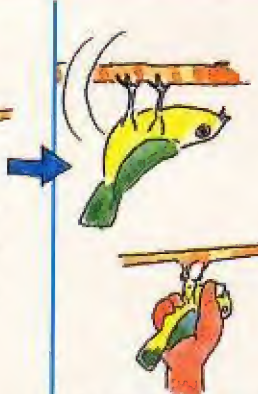
Hold your breath and wait patiently. Sometimes birds came soon. Other times we had to wait for more than one hour. You have to encourage the call bird when he is not a good singer by whistling. Using your tongue and upper teeth, whistle the sound "chi-i-yu."



Here comes a white-eye! The most thrilling moment. You have to be careful not to make a noise.



If you rush to catch the bird, it struggles in fright and gets filthy.



The best catch is the moment when the bird swings down.



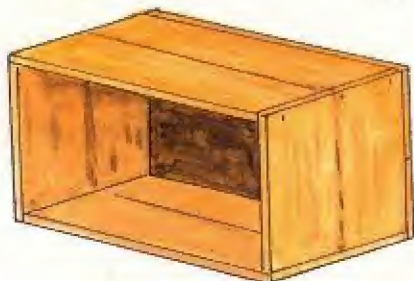
Take the birdlime off the legs of the bird. Keep the bird in a black sock to calm it down.



HAKO-TORI-KAGO

(Bird Cage)

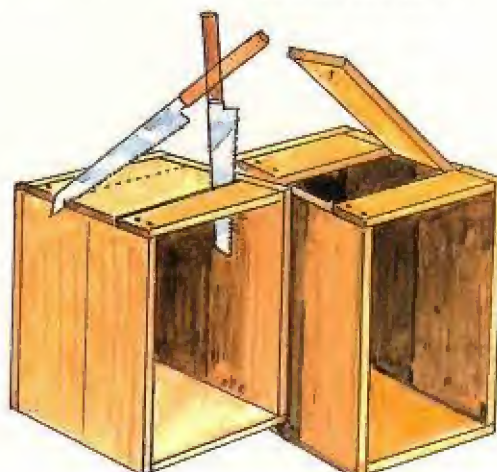
I asked for a wooden box for shipping apples at a grocery store, or made a box with wooden plates by myself.



Nail on some joints to strengthen the box.

Make an exit.

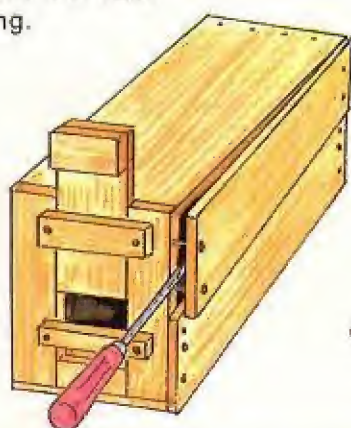
Saw off a wooden plate of 10 cm in width. Keep the cutout plate.



Make a sliding door for the exit using the cutout plate.



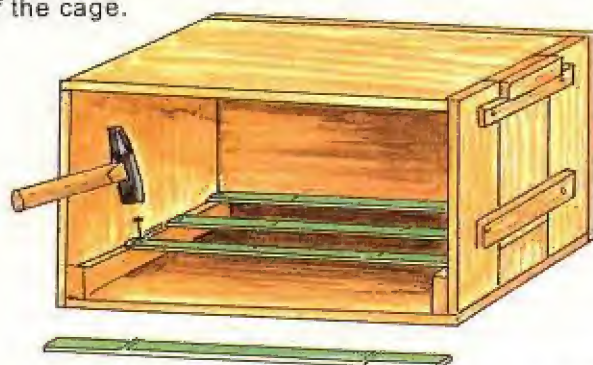
Make the plate at the back open for cleaning.



Open and close with a wire.

A leather belt hinge could do when I couldn't find a real one.

Nail several thin bamboo plates at the lower part of the cage.

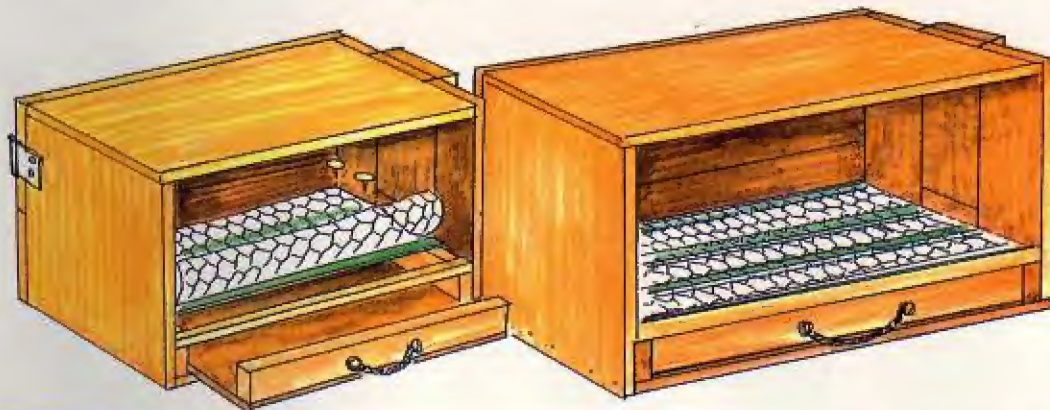


Make a drawer for droppings out of veneer plate under the bamboo bars.



Spread out a **wire net** on the bamboo bars.

Bend over the excessive net so as not to damage a bird.



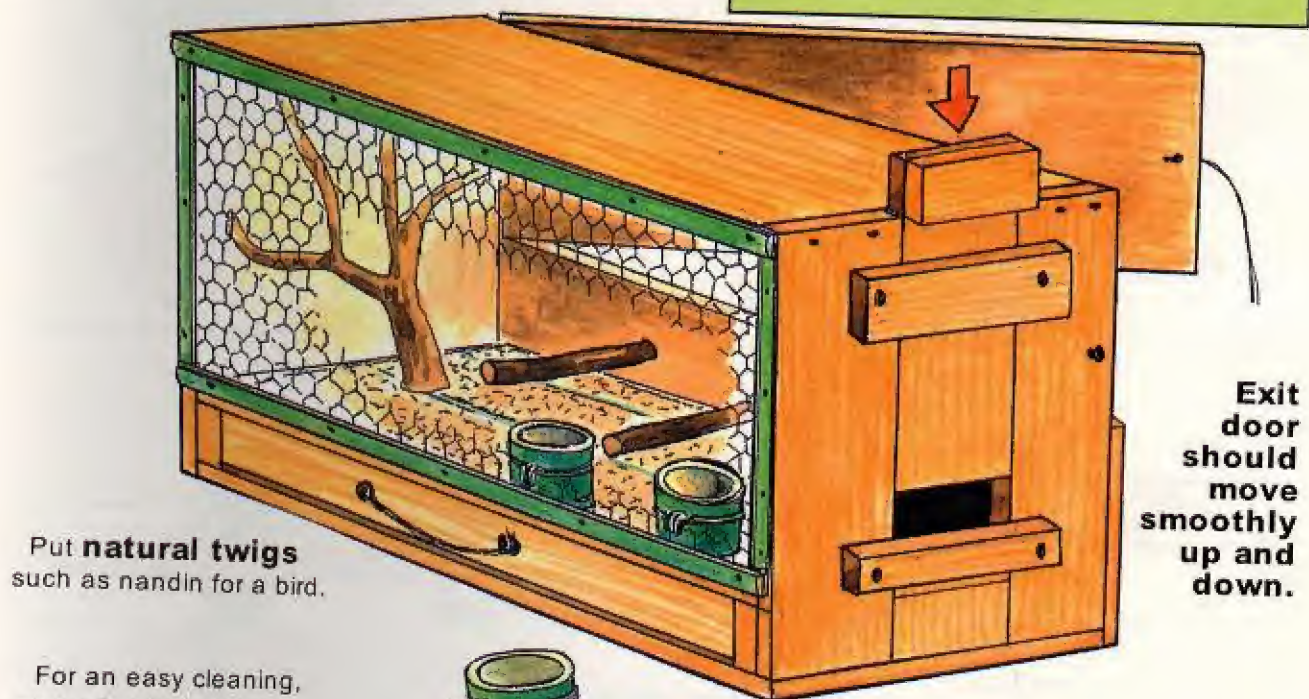
Spread out a wire net on front

Make cross notches with a saw to keep the bamboo split while nailing.



Use split bamboo bars to press down the net with tiny nails.

When you want a bird to get in or out for cleaning etc., move it to another cage with two exits set side by side.



Put **natural twigs** such as nandin for a bird.

For an easy cleaning, cover the drawer for droppings with newspaper.

Exit door should move smoothly up and down.

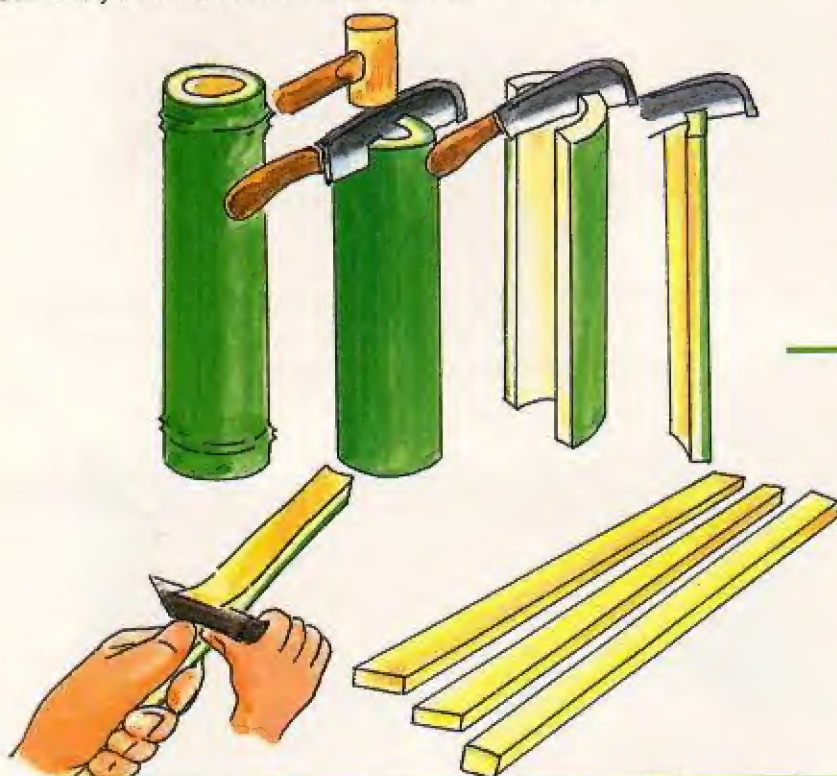


Bamboo cups for water and food.
(Get them in and out from the back doors.)

TAKE-TORI-KAGO-TSUKURI

(Making A Bamboo Bird Cage)

Use a Moso-bamboo of 1-2 years old, or older, which is hard enough.
Use a dry one instead of one cut fresh from a bush.

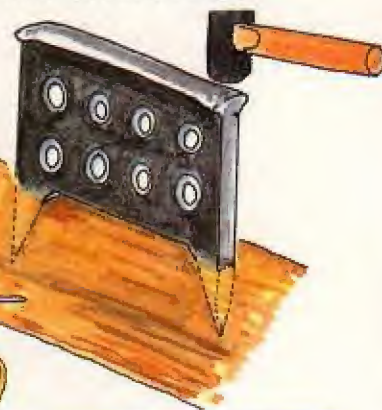


When I was a child a ready-made bamboo bird cage cost about 500--600 yen, too expensive for a child allowances. We got together and struggled to make them by ourselves. We joined pocket money to buy a bamboo-strip maker. Making bamboo strips took time and much labor.

To cut a strip, fix a knife and pull a bamboo. Make it thin enough to get through a bamboo-strip maker.



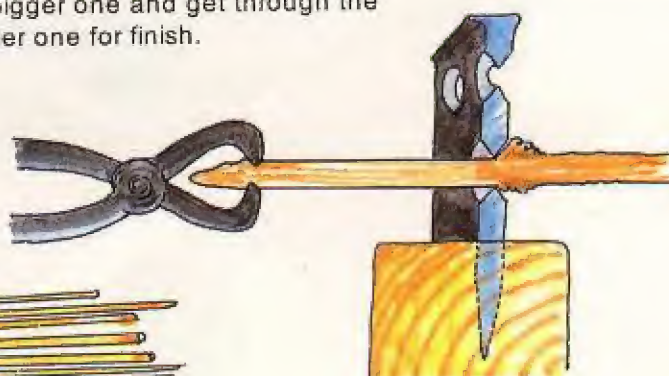
Get the tip of bamboo through a bamboo-strip maker, and pull it through the hole with a cutting pliers. It sure needs strength.



The holes are of 2 sizes. Start with the bigger one and get through the smaller one for finish.

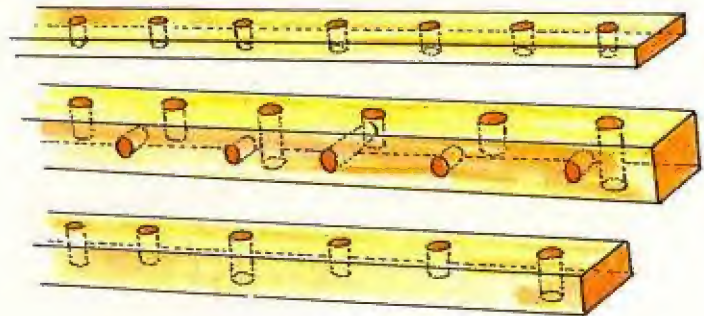
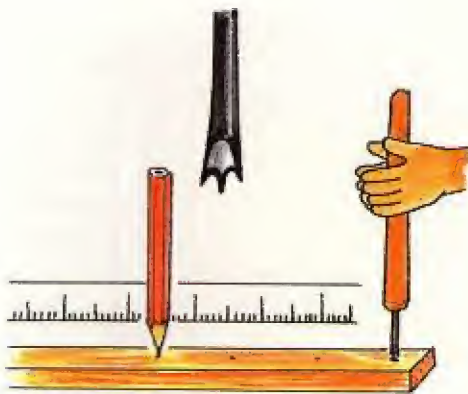


To cut bamboo strips to the same length, press a knife on a strip and roll the strip.

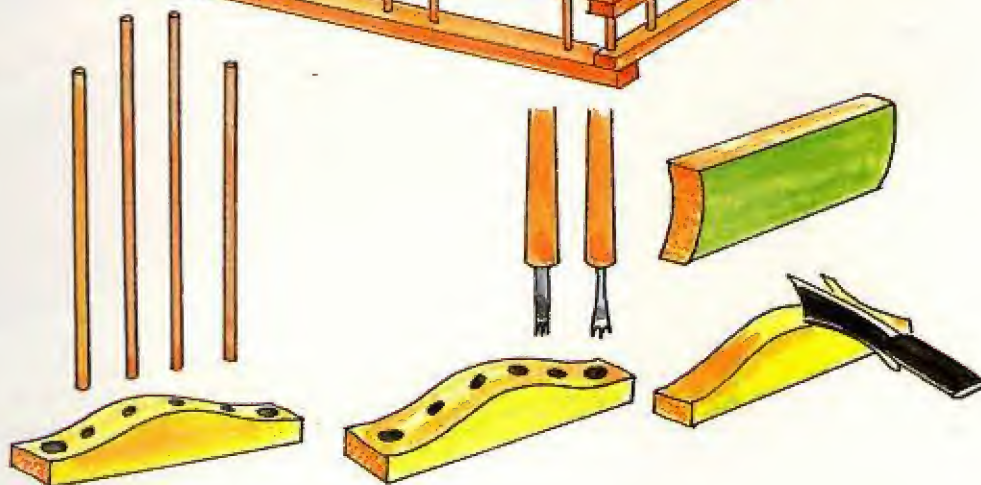
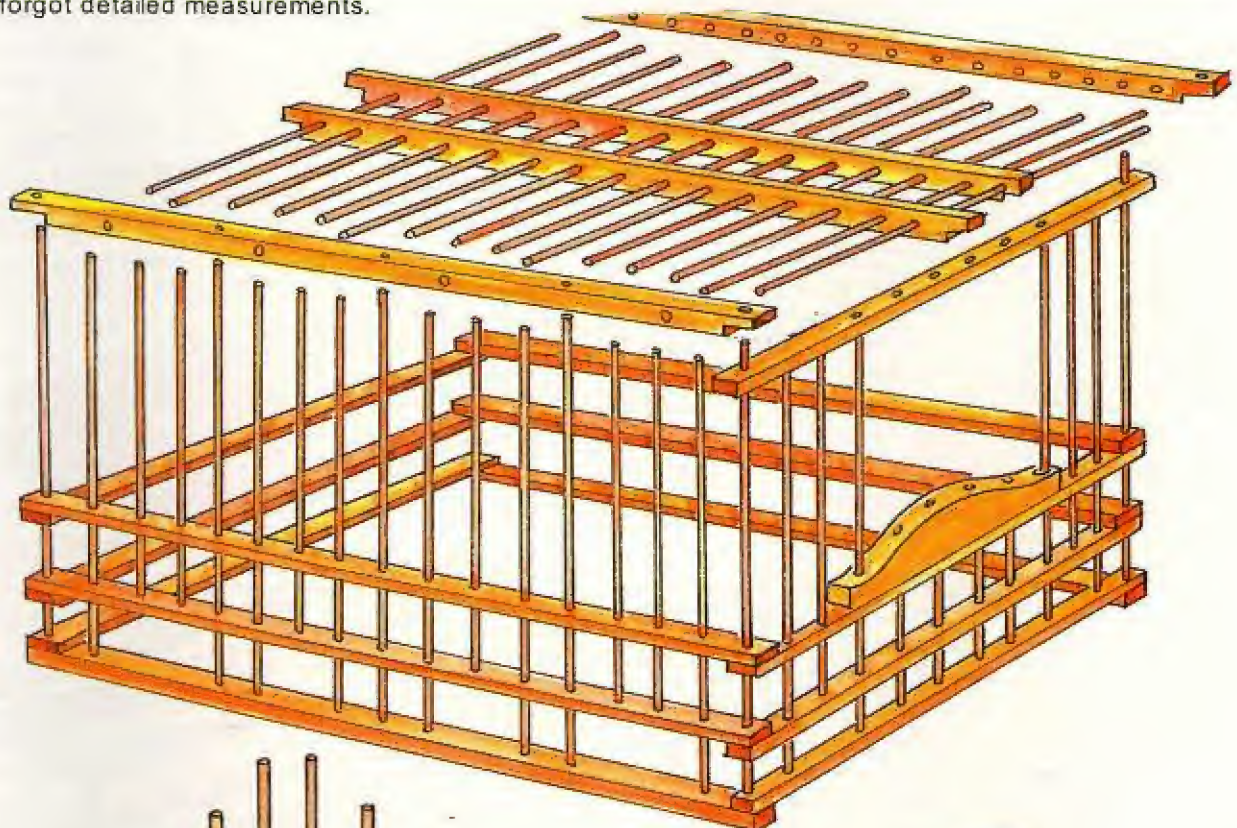


Measure precisely for the holes of each strip.
Make holes with a sharp carving knife.

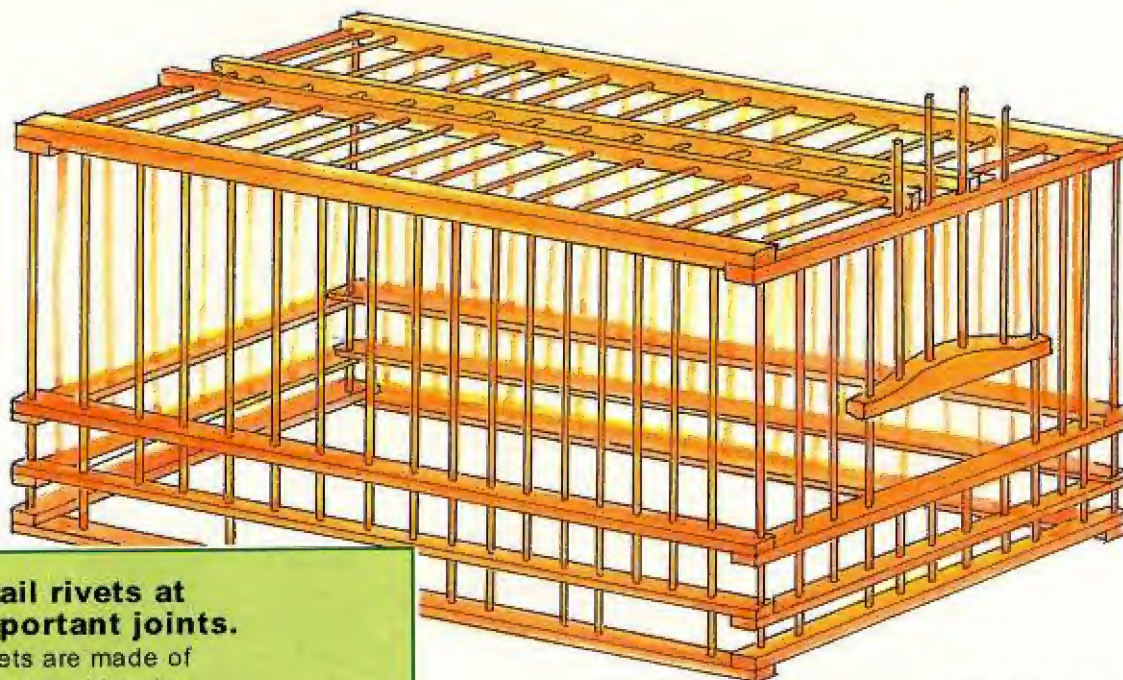
Some holes get through, others don't.



I forgot detailed measurements.

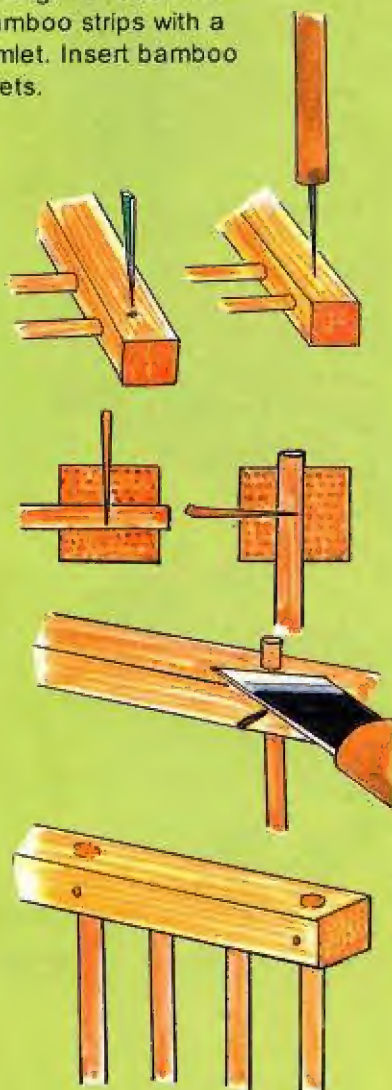


To make an exit part slide up and down easily,
the holes at both ends should be a little larger.



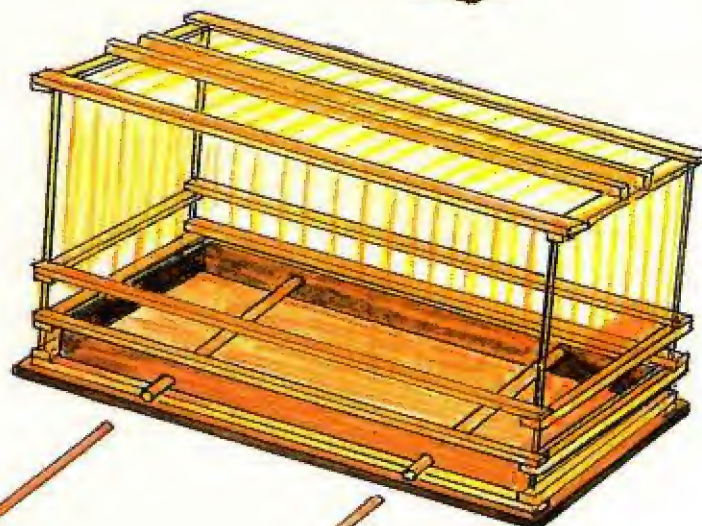
Nail rivets at important joints.

Rivets are made of sharpened bamboo. Make holes deep enough to reach the bamboo strips with a gimlet. Insert bamboo rivets.



Protruding bamboo strips or excessive rivets should be cut off.

Make a bottom tray with cryptomeria plates. Make 4 sides to be exactly inserted into the inner part of the bamboo frame. The tray sides have 4 holes.

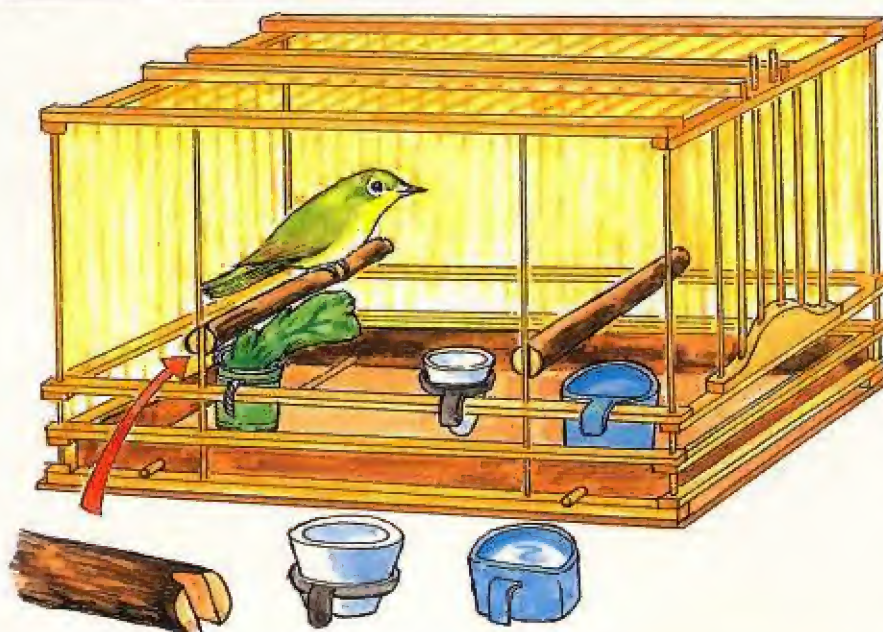


Get bamboo strips through the holes to make the upper part and the bottom joined securely. Now you are ready to put a bird in! When cleaning, put the cage on the floor and take off the bottom tray quickly so as not to let the bird fly away.

ME-JI-RO-KA-I (Keeping A White-Eye)

Put the cups of **water** and **food** in a bamboo cage.

At night and on cold days, move the bird into a box bird cage.



Nandin is good for a perch. Cut nandin a little longer than the width of the cage. Make notches at both ends so it supports itself at any height.

Making food for a white-eye

Get a chickweed in a field.

Peel a baked **sweet potato**.

Grind a chickweed well in a mortar, add sweet potato and mix them well.

Put spoonfuls of food into a cup. I made with cabbage and other green weeds in place of chickweed, but I added sweet potato every time.

I always kept a couple of sweet potatoes baked at the bath or the kitchen furnace, and later cooled.

When I felt it troublesome to make food, I bought ready-made food.

Other foods were green weeds, tangerines, ripen astringent persimmons etc.

Change water once or twice every day. In summer a bird took a bath when I put a larger container filled with water.



chickweed + the inside of a baked sweet potato.

Add a little water when it's not soft enough.



ready-made food

You only add water and mix well.

some other.

half cut mandarin orange.



vegetable greens.



We kept other birds such as a **Japanese Bunting** and **Society Finch**.

These birds laid eggs and hatched them, which was an excitement.



For Japanese Buntings or Society Finches we made nests with a rope wound and sewed with a cotton thread.



I enjoyed raising them from little chicks, feeding them food with a toothpick or catching worms for them etc. Later some flew a half way, or I let them go away at the end.

U-SA-GI-GA-RI (Hare Hunting)



I haven't understood the meaning of a well-known Japanese folk song, "Native village", in which the lyric goes, "That mountain where we drove hares..." until I got quite old. When I was 20 years old or so and was thinking of my native town, I suddenly remembered "**hare hunting**" held annually at the junior high school. In my memory it was done in late autumn with all the students attending. (Those days there were two junior high schools in Mikawa, and my school had 400 - 500 students. Now only one school remains because of depopulation.)

We looked forward to it though it was held only once or twice a year. There were no classes on that day. All the students in gymnastic uniforms carried the tools and headed for the hill under the command of teachers and senior students. Seniors carried nets from the store room and juniors had "driving-out bamboos" to make big slapping noise.

The net was stretched as wide as dozens of meters on a hill. All the students made a long line parallel to the net hundreds of meters away from it. With a signal by teachers, we moved forward making noise and yelling loudly toward the net. It was like a marching of infantry (foot soldiers) in feudal times. The big roar on a hill lasted a quarter of an hour or so. The line of people reached the net. Whether there was a catch or not, I was not sure. Then we moved to another place and did it again.

When all the students returned school quite tired, the lunch of mixed rice with meat was ready. Seniors said the meat was hare meat. I wondered if it was true. Was there enough time to cook the meat? Was there enough catch to serve all the students? Still I half believed the story and ate it when I was a first-grader.

GI-N-NA-N-HIRO-I (Ginkgo Nut Gathering)

At the ground of our elementary school there were dozens of ginkgo trees. The bigger one was as thick as three of us surrounding it hand in hand. Late autumn lots of ginkgo fruits fell down. They smelled bad when smashed, but the nuts inside tasted good. Some dealers bought the gathered nuts from us at quite a good price. So we collected them hard and sold to dealers. The school bought books and other equipments with the income.



KI-NO-MI-A-SO-BI

(Plays With Nuts)

In autumn we enjoyed various plays with nuts. Here are a few of them I remember playing quite often.

Sticking ginkgo nuts:

I had many ginkgo nuts stick to my face.

If you have one on the forehead, you prove to be very good at it. But if you have them too long, you'll have traces left.



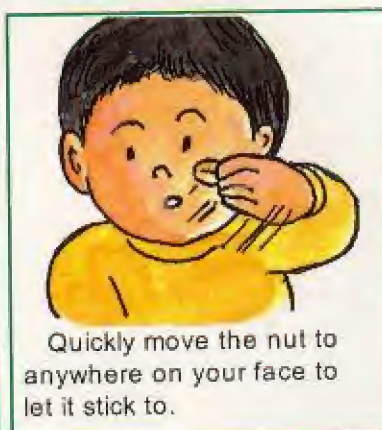
Ginkgo nuts Take a nut out of a fruit.



Rub the nut on a stone or cement to make a hole.



Take out the meat of the nut with a nail or bamboo pick. (Empty cleanly)



Quickly move the nut to anywhere on your face to let it stick to.



Breathe in from the hole of a nut.

Horse-chestnut whistle:



Rub a nut on a stone or concrete face. Remove the inside. Not so easy.



It whistles "ho-ho."

Spinning top of acorn nuts:

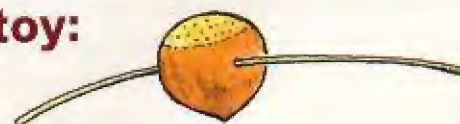
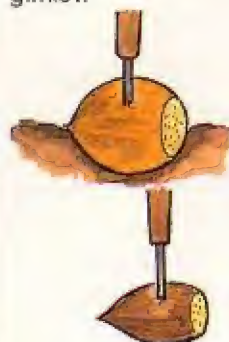
Make a hole with a gimlet.



Insert a thin bamboo or wooden stick.

Balancing toy:

Make a hole through a acorn with a gimlet.

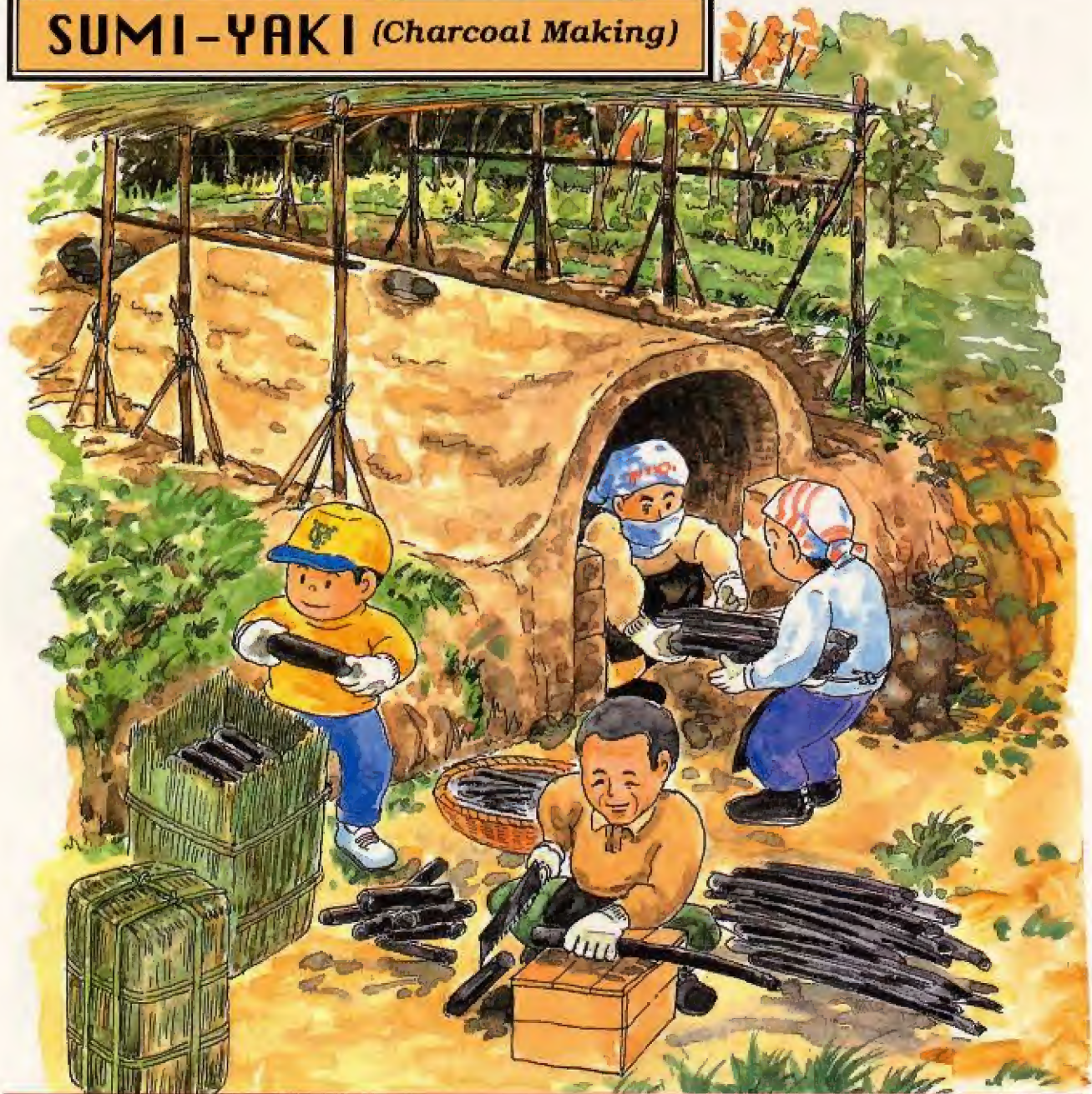


Put through a thin bamboo stick, the acorn in the middle.



Insert two acorns of similar size to both ends.

SUMI-YAKI (Charcoal Making)



"SUMIYAKI", charcoal making begins when winter is near at hand. Charcoal was important not only for warmers, such as foot warmers or braziers, but also for cooking, such as portable clay cooking stoves. My family were making charcoal for sale, and also for our own use, when a gas system was not available at that time.

First the woods of oak, pasania or camellia were taken out from the hills and were cut to about one meter lengths. How to make charcoal is shown in the following page as playing at making, but it is almost the same as actual making.

There was a charcoal kiln in our garden and I have a memory of the white smoke always climbing up to the sky.

One day, a touring movie show was planned in our garden, but the entertainer thought the garden had smoke which interfered with the clearness of the screen. Finally, the place to hold the show changed to another family's garden, upon which I cried very much.

This picture shows the scene when a fire inside a kiln is completely extinguished and charcoal has just been made. The charcoal is cut to about thirty cm length and packed in miscanthus grass and delivered. Hills became bold and are planted with cedars. The kiln is destroyed.

When the opening was opened, I was a little excited wondering whether it would be well done or not. I always asked to be allowed to open the opening. Bad charcoal, such as the insufficiently burned or the broken pieces were used for our home.

SUMI-YA-KI-GO-KKO (Playing Charcoal Making)

Cut logs of a slightly shorter length than the depth of the hole.



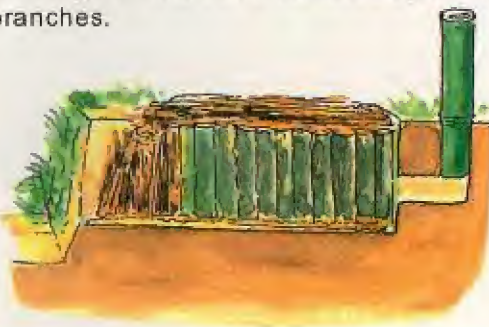
Make the kiln in a place where there is no possibility of a fire, such as the bank of a river.



Make a chimney.



The logs should be sandwiched by dead branches.



Cover them with straw like a semi cylindrical shaped house. Further cover with clay.



Beat the clay tightly.



Make the opening for ignition.



Make a fire of the dead branches and fan by hand until the fire enters into the inner parts.

It really takes a day to complete all this work.

White smoke rising up from the chimney means that the fire is spreading to the inner parts.

The opening should be gradually narrowed with the smoke color changing.

The opening should be completely closed when the smoke color changes to violet and when near the chimney the smoke is transparent.



Finally, the chimney should be closed.

Cool by water mixed with clay, if the kiln is still hot after a night has passed.



After confirmation that it is completely extinguished, take out the charcoal just finished. If any fire still exist, the charcoal begins to burn again because of the supply of oxygen. You must be extremely cautious in opening the opening.



Actual charcoal making needs a week till closing and three to four days till opening the kiln.



Charcoal in the front part is excessively burned and in the back part insufficiently. The ones in the center part are well done. The same is true for actual making. There is always a semi cylindrical-shaped dome of charcoal inside the kiln.

After taking them out, you should repeat the same procedure to make charcoal except that logs and dead branches should be laid from the opening.



It pleased me that I did almost the same thing as my parents to make charcoal, even though the quantity was small.

MA-GA-N-KO (TSU-RA-RA) TO-RI (Icicle Taking)

There are many springs of water in my home town and so water from a well was very delicious. In the summer season, we often cooled watermelons in the spring or the well. When I lived in a city later, I could not become used to the city water.

In the frosty winter mornings, there were "MAGANKO" ("TSURARA"), icicles around the rocks where spring water oozed out. We children enjoyed licking them.

There were no refrigerators at that time and ice was a rare thing. In the summer season, there were sherbet in the shops, but it cost money. So we enjoyed icicles even in the winter season, licking or gnawing them.

I have a memory of eating icicles or snow, mixed with sugar.



UMA-NO-RI-GAS-SEN (Horse Riding Battle)



When it was getting cold, we enjoyed the plays which warmed us up. Horse riding battle was one of the popular games in winter. Divide into two teams of the same number. If the total is an odd number, the two leaders play janken and decide which team the smallest child will join. When dividing teams, make pairs of similar ages and bodies, and play janken 2 by 2 to separate the winners and losers. If the following battles result is one-sided, exchange the members.

The leaders play janken to decide which becomes the horse first. Also the members of each team play janken to decide the order of jumping, or the order of making the horse.

When the horse team is ready, the rider team jumps on it one after another. Some boys jump high and ride on violently. The horse team has to endure the whole weight till all the rider team gets on it. If someone in the horse collapses or separates from others because of the weight or shock, the horse team loses. The game starts over again. If someone on the horse falls down accidentally, the horse team wins. When all the rider team gets on the horse, the head member of the horse and the first rider play janken quickly to decide the winner. The winner will be the rider team.

TE-O-SHI-SU-MO (Sumo, Pushing With Palms)

When there is not enough members for a game, this is a good one to kill time.



Stand face to face 50 cm
apart from each other.
At the sign of

**"HAK-KE-YOH-I
NO-KO-TTA"**

"Ready. Go!",

push each other, using
only the palms. If you touch
any part other than the
palms, you lose. Or, if your
foot moves even a bit, you
lose too. You watch the
hands of the opponent
carefully and try to feint the
other.



BATTA (HI-YO-WANA) (Snare For Birds)

Nowadays, no one tries to snare in this way, but it was a popular way to snare the birds in those days. What about the bird's fate? Of course, I ate them with my friends when I snared them. You might think what pitiful things I did, but they were sweet refreshments at that age. And there were so many birds in the mountains. Now I wonder why there are not so many birds in the mountains compared with old days.

This is a snare for birds-shrikes, bulbuls, pigeons, etc., in the bushes.

Cut 120-130 cm of hard bamboo or oak tree.



Two stakes must be made by cutting branches of a tree as seen in the picture.



a wire.

a tree branch.

Dig the mud under the rope.

A straw rope must be put through a bamboo pole.



Bait, which is the fruit of ripe astringent persimmons, nadins, wax trees, or some bright colored fruit like that, are placed in a cave in front of the snare.

The bamboo pole into which the rope is put through should be hooked on the branch.

Birds which want to eat the bait have to enter the cave via the snare. The cave should be circled by conspicuous branches so that the birds are able to find it easily from the sky.



Arrow marks mean the directions of force.



A bird finds the fruit in the cave and can only come to it by passing through the snare.

It may sit on the bamboo bar. At that moment, the guillotine drops on the neck of the bird.



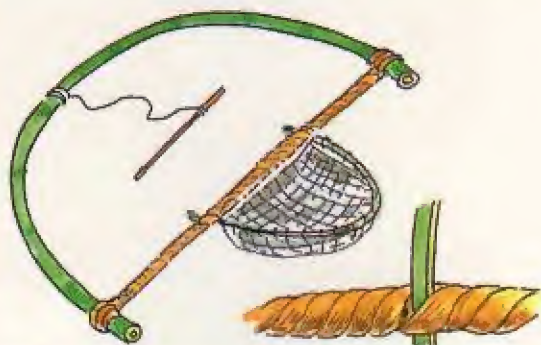
Once a bird had fallen into the snare, the birds were clever enough to know the existence of the snare. I had to change places.



When I went to the snare the next morning, I could see occasionally a bird fallen into it, but I never saw it being snared.

I got three to four birds in a season. I was always excited before going to see whether I had snared something or not.

SU-ZU-ME-WANA (Snare For Sparrows)



This snare utilizes bamboo's elasticity. Place unhulled rice or millet grains near the bar. And you hide yourself in a bush or somewhere and guard the scene.

When sparrows perch on the bar, the longitudinal bar is released by their weight. The net is not strong, so you need to run to the net and catch them immediately before they escape. The capture rate is low.



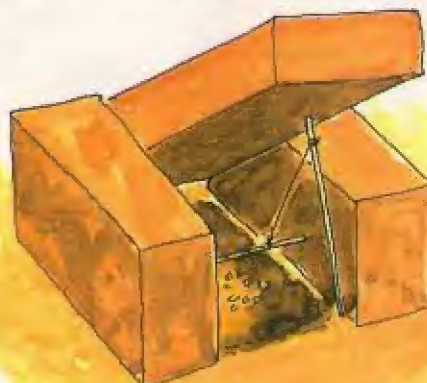
SHOH-KE-TORI (Capturing Sparrows)



When sparrows are eating bait under the cage, pull the rope and you may be able to capture them. But I never succeeded.

RE-N-GA-WANA (Snare By Bricks)

Bricks are utilized for a cage as seen in the picture. I have a memory of a few sparrows captured by that method.



SAKE-ZUKE-GOME-ESA (Bait Of "Sake" Soaked Rice)

Scatter "SAKE" (Japanese alcohol drink) soaked rice, under the brick. The idea was that when sparrow ate the rice they would get drunk and captured easily. However, bird was never captured that way.

GO-MU-JUH (Rubber Powered Gun)

This gun was the most popular game in the children's world. Almost everybody usually carried it in their pockets or hanging on their belts. When sparrows, bulbuls, shrikes, pigeons or something like that were found on electric wires or branches of trees, they were aimed at by weapons with stones. The bullet seldom hit them, but I

have a memory of experiencing three to four birds in my whole childhood.

This game may seem dangerous, but **children on those days had hard and fast rules** about not aiming toward the direction where people were, I have no memory of people who were hit.



Cut the fork of a tree which is hard such as **oak** or **camellia**.



The grip should be thick enough to fit your hand.

The strength of the right and left rubber should be equal.

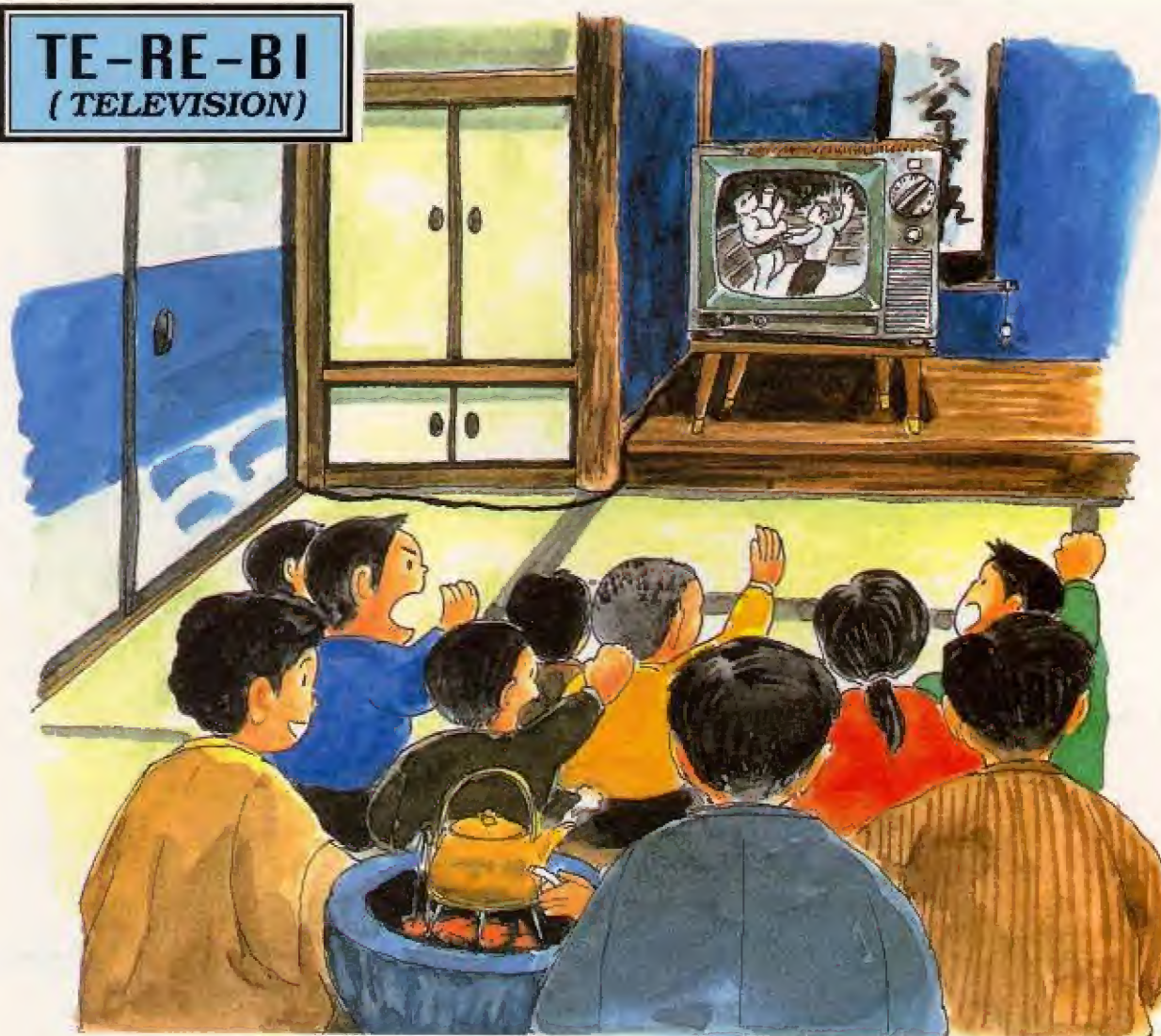
Two holes should be made on a used belt leather.

Aim taking Apparatus.

The bullets were stones of pin ball size. Your arm should be stretched straight forward the aim point, pull the rubber with the stone, and then release it.



TE-RE-BI (TELEVISION)



"Wow! Riki-Doh-Zan (a famous professional wrestling player) !
Go, Karate chop!"

We children, used to go to a house which had a television set to watch it. There were only one or two homes in the vicinity with one. Of course, we went to the house to watch television when the popular programs of Sumo (Japanese wrestling), Western movies, dramas, or something like that were on the screen, saying to the person who owned it, "Excuse me, but would you kindly allow me to watch the television?" The owner said, "Oh, yes, please do." All at once, many children entered the room and cried, "Wow! Wow!" or something like that. Thinking back, the owner probably thought us to be troublesome.

After one or two years of having one or two television sets in the vicinity, there were a fairly many television sets here by the thirty fifth or thirty sixth year of Showa (in 1960 or 1961). At last my parents bought it in my family when I was in the fourth grade of elementary school. My parents granted my strong request because of my crying every day. The price was so high at that time that it was forty to fifty thousand yen which was approximately six times as high as the wage of a first year business man just entering the average company (seven or eight thousand yen a month was the salary). I felt proud that a television antenna stood on our house roof. Although I promised my parents to study hard even if I had time to watch television, I was absorbed with watching television every night and I used to be scolded by my parents.

Popular programs which I never forget were Eyes of Jaguar, Harimao, Shiroumadohji, Super man, A good dog Rintintin, A gun man with no home, Rawhide, A rifle man, Annie get your gun, Western parade in lone ranger, Bronco Shyan, Brother Cartwright (Bonanza), A circus goes to the west, Popeye, Disneyland Series, A good dog Lassi, Sanbaka Taisho, Gekko Kamen, Maboroshi Tantei, Tetsuwan Atom, Iron Man NO. 28, Eight Man, Yaguruma-Kenno-Suke, Onmitsu Kenshi, Ninjabutai, Gekko, Kyohfunomiira, and at a later age, Combat, Ben Casey, great Refugee, Ultra-Q, Sanbiki no Samurai, etc.

And I was strongly influenced by the heroes who came on the scene, imitated and played them. These were the norm of my life. For instance for relations between my father and me, I imitated Rifle Man, or for justice and bravery, Brother Cartwright was my norm.

YAKI-ISHI-KA-I-RO (Body Warmer Of Warmed Stones)

It was bitterly cold when I went to school on a white frosty morning. My hands, feet, ears, and cheeks, were so cold that they felt freezing like ice. On mornings like that, I often carried YAKI-ISHI-KAIRO, a warmed stone, in my hands and warmed my hands or cheek, which kept me warm for a while. After it became cold, I gave it back to the river.



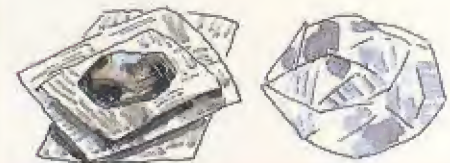
Put a stone of ONIGIRI (boiled rice ball) size into a fire.



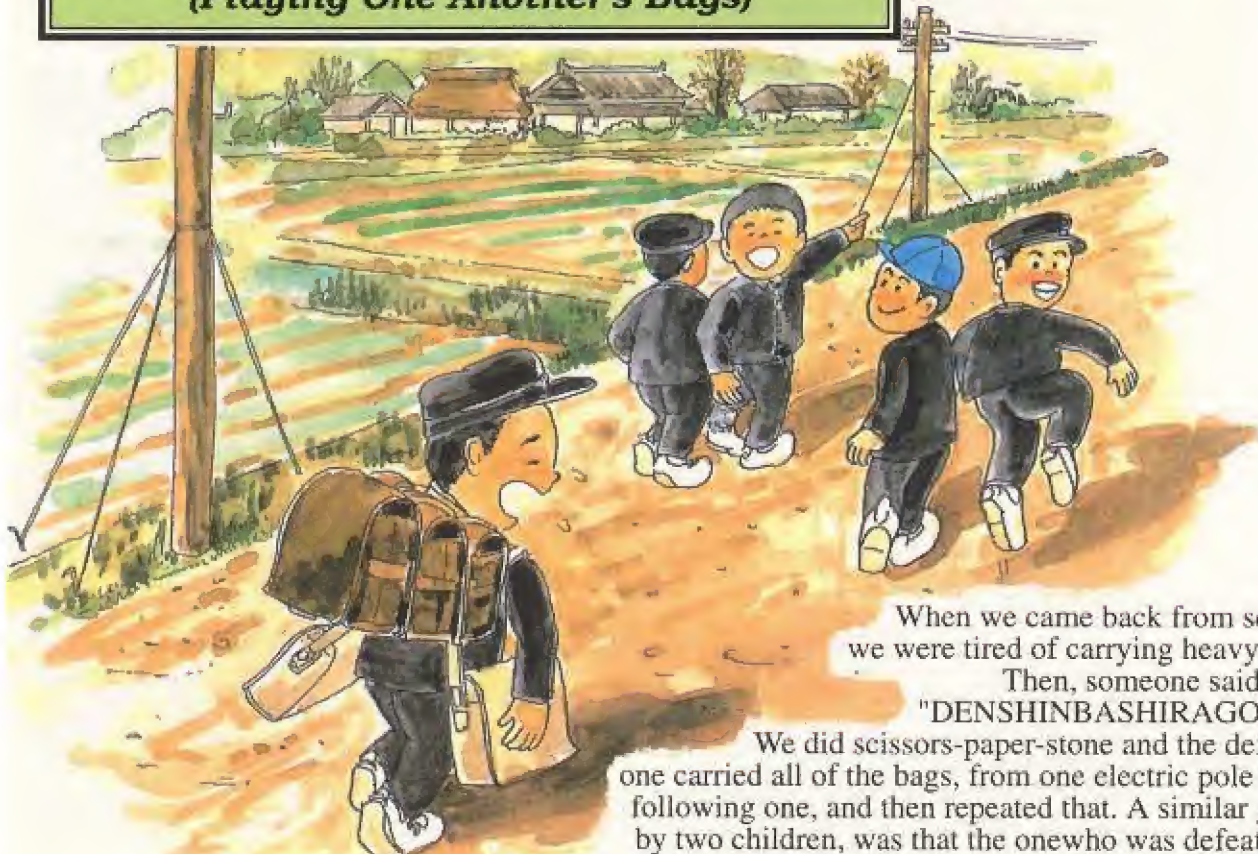
Pull out after a while.



Wrap it in used newspapers double or triple, lest your hands be burned by it.



DEN-SHIN-BASHIRA-GO-SHI (Playing One Another's Bags)



When we came back from school, we were tired of carrying heavy bags.

Then, someone said to do "DENSHINBASHIRAGOSHI".

We did scissors-paper-stone and the defeated one carried all of the bags, from one electric pole to the following one, and then repeated that. A similar game, by two children, was that the onewho was defeated by scissors-paper-stone had to carry the other on his back.

SORI-ASOBI (Play With Sleigh)



It was rather a warm weather in my home town with seldom snow deeper than 20-30 cm, but once we had so much snow that our elementary school was closed. We usually had more snow in winter in those days than today, because the earth may be getting warmer and warmer recently.

One morning when I got up early, fields and mountains around my home were a blanket of white snow. Immediately, I went to the mountain near by to cut and bring bamboo to make a sleigh. As soon as I made it, I went to the slope where small cedars of one or two meters high were planted, or to roads which were **wonderful ski fields**.

Friends who made their sleighs gathered on the slope. The most thrilling place was a long mountain road which had a slope with high sides located just above my home. We sped down from the higher part like a bob sleigh at high speed. It was a splendid scene.

But the snow was melted down by the afternoon and we had to bring the snow from the shady parts or cut bamboo and spread them on the slope.

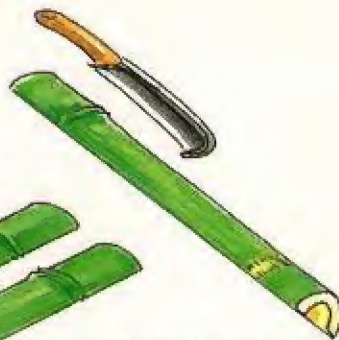
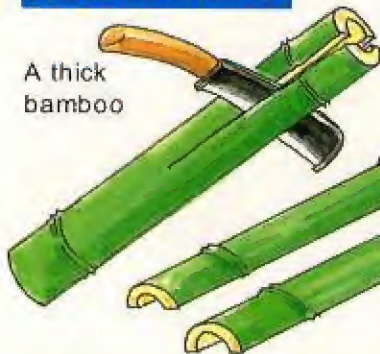
We usually played on that road even when we did not have snow. Another way to ski was scattering wet leaves or spreading water on it.

However, that road was the one which workers used to go to work. And we, children, were scolded by adults not to play like that. And so that road returned to its normal state.

SORI (Sleigh)

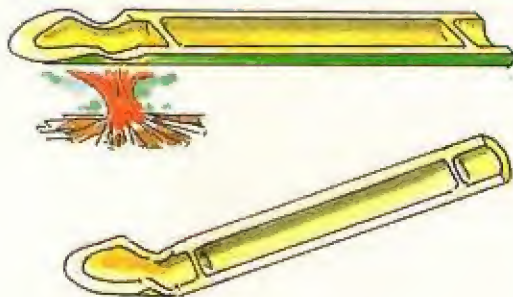
How to make

A thick bamboo



Surfaces of bamboo joint should be flat by shaving with a knife.

Bamboo parts to be bent should be cut narrow so as to be bent easily.

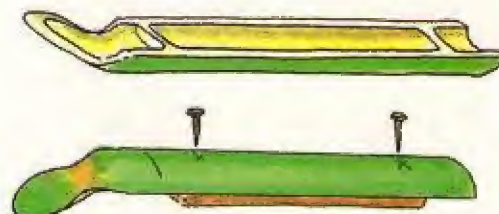


Gradually bend the parts by heating them moderately. When they are put into snow or water still bent, they are fixed in the bent position.

Put round timber pole inside the bamboo.



Cut the bamboo with cross marks so that the heads of nails driven into the bamboo will be below the surface.



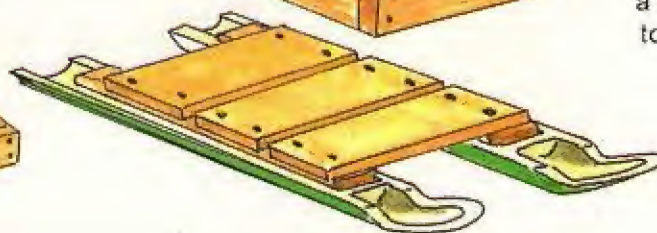
Drive nails into the bamboo and timber poles at the cross marks.



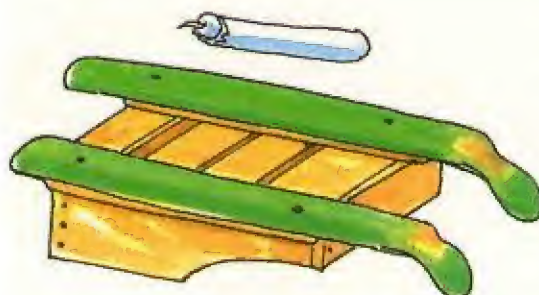
The seat is made of a fish box or newly made with wood.



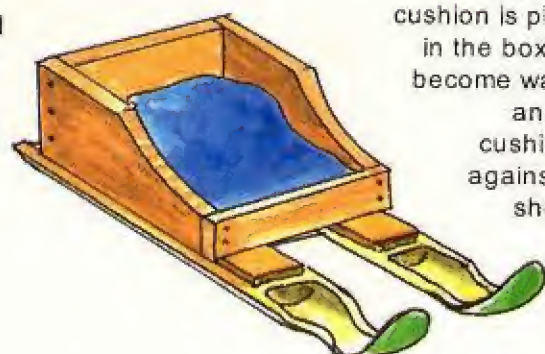
As seen in the picture, there was also a sleigh, which had no box. A SORI which had a box was better to get stability in sledging.



The surface of the bamboo must be rubbed with a candle which is the substitute for wax.



When a Japanese cushion is placed in the box, you become warmer and are cushioned against the shocks.



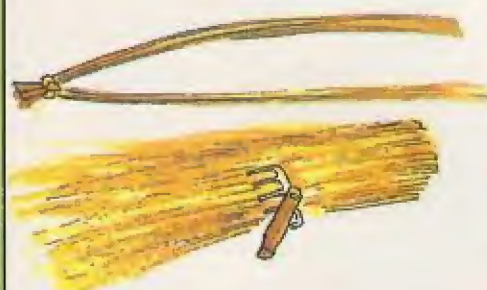
NATTO-TSUKU-RI

(Making Of Fermented Soybeans)

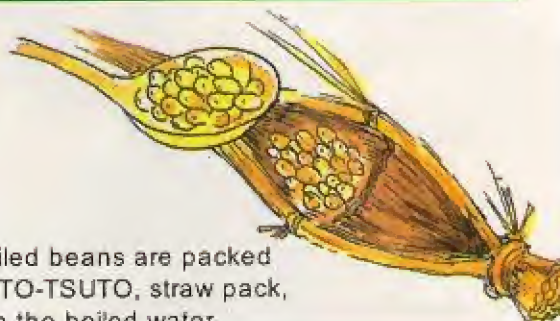
In my childhood, I liked NATTO, fermented soybeans, and used to make them.

As mentioned about NATTOTSUKURI at the section of "INASAKU", NATTOTSUKURI, making of fermented soybeans, begins with the coming of winter. I was curious about the reason why **bacteria** of fermented soybeans grows in rice straw and who was the discoverer of the bacteria.

As seen in the picture, card the straw with a comb and make "**NATTO-TSUTO**", the straw packs, in which boiled beans are packed.



The following is how to make them, which is the way my mother did. At first, beans are soaked in water for a day and they are boiled in a pan until the beans become soft enough.



The boiled beans are packed into NATTO-TSUTO, straw pack, with the boiled water.

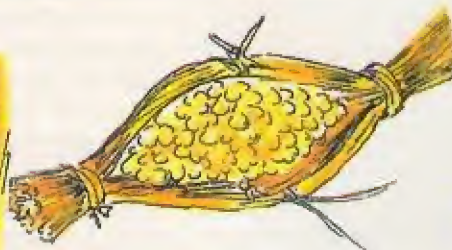
NATTO-TSUTO are bound tightly by straw ropes. Two or three NATTO-TSUTO are packed furthermore in other straws, which are bound over again by other ropes.



Boiled water is evenly scattered on the bundles so that the warmth of the boiled water permeates into the center parts of the bundle.



After one week, you should pull out a sample and see the stickiness of it. If it is covered with white bacteria and stickiness is there, all of them are OK.



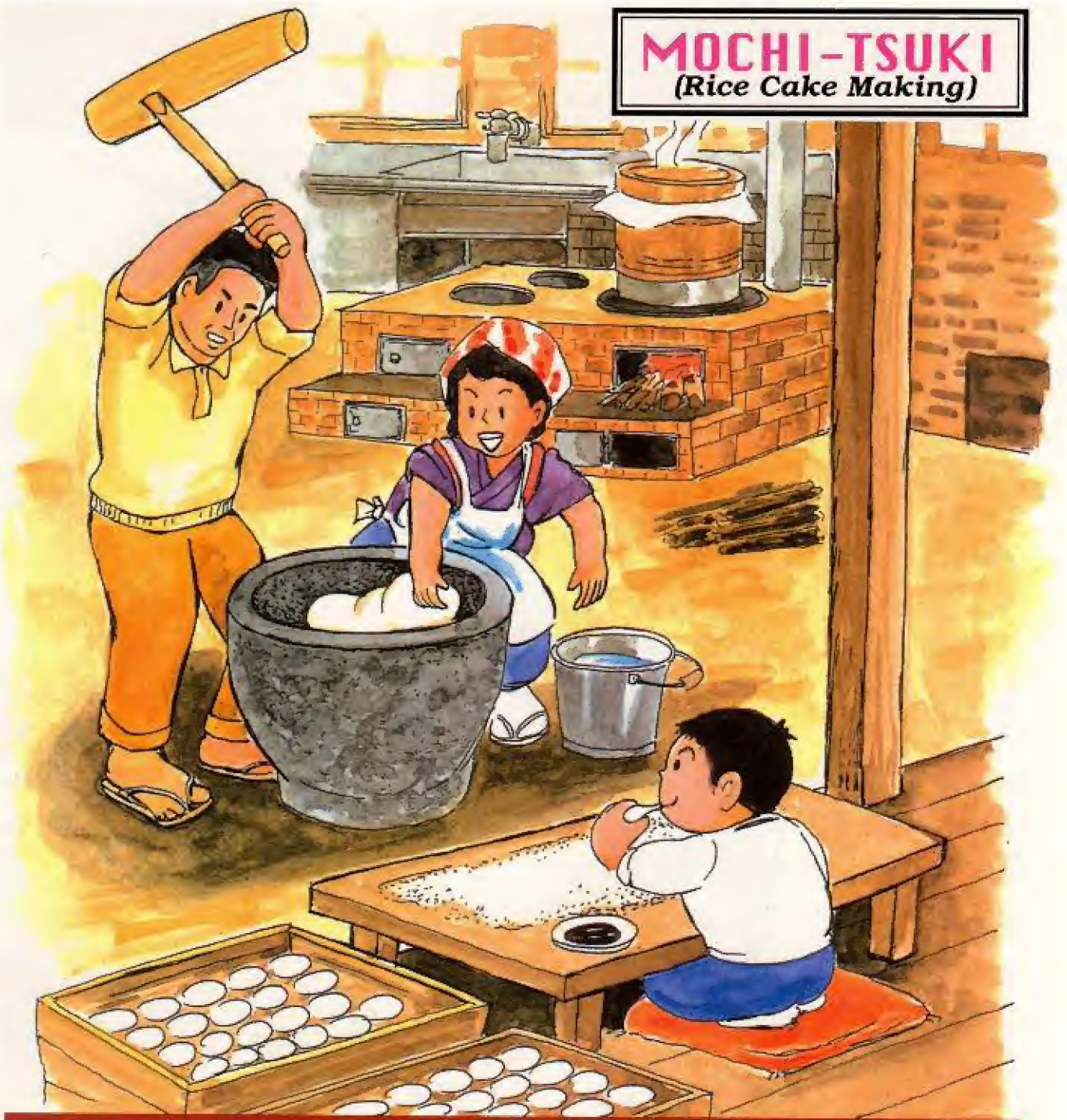
The upstairs shed at home was the place where the bundles were. Each time when we took meals, we usually brought them down from upstairs as necessary.

We served them in a bowl, flavoring with salt or soy (Japanese sauce) and ate them.



NATTO, these home made fermented soybeans, were so sweet. I'll never forget the memory of the sweet.

MOCHI-TSUKI (Rice Cake Making)



Early in the morning of December 30th, the sound **"pet-tang pet-tang!"** woke me up. **Yes, the rice-cake pounding had already started!** The white vapor vigorously steamed up from the cooker on the kitchen range. The first batch had just been started.

Father swung down the pestle with all his might, which made him look more powerful than ever. While he raised the pestle, mother quickly mixed the rice-cake (so as to be pounded evenly). It always made me worried that some day her hand would be severely pounded by the pestle.

One day it did happen. When I was playing nearby, mother yelled, **"Ouch!"** I thought, **"she's got finally hit!"** and rushed to the mortar. The rice-cake mixture was red and my mother looked so pained with one hand covering the other. I clung to my mother and cried hard. After a second my father laughed and mother poked out her tongue. I looked into the rice-cake mixture. It was just the red color-additive. Both my parents had teased me. I hit my parents over and over again, my face still wet with tears.

When the rice-cake mixture was pounded enough and soft, it was taken out to the wooden box which was covered with corn flour. Before the mixture cooled down, it had to be divided into pieces and made round-shaped. Mother squeezed out one after another, all of the same size as if she had measured them.

After one batch was made into round pieces, another batch of steamed rice was put into the mortar, and the pounding started again.

TSU-RU-SHI-BA and SHI-DA-TO-RI (Collecting Of Bush Wood And Fernery)

TSURUSHIBA, a kind of bush wood, and SHIDA, a kind of fernery, are used for the New Year's decorations. When the New Year was getting close, you had to collect them in the mountain. The plants were rare and I had to go to faraway mountains with my friends, taking a lunch box.



SHI-ME-NA-WA (The Decoration Rope)

The bundle was made of rice straw, being knitted after softening by beating with a hammer.



I have a memory of making them a few times, but cannot remember so well. The same for "**KADO-MATSU**", too.

OH-MI-SO-KA (New Year's Eve)

OHMISOKA New Year's Eve, was passing quietly. The New Year would open auspiciously after the usual Japan Broadcasting Station's program, Kohaku-Utagassen (a contest between selected professional male and female singers) was over, children usually had a custom to go to a spring located at our colony and scooped up fresh water to take to their home. We called the act of drawing water from a spring "**Waki-mizu-tori**". I have a memory of hearing that, if we used the water to make the New Year's breakfast of rice cakes boiled with vegetables, we would be happy.

When we finished that, children gathered in front of "Tenjinsama" shrine and talked to each other until New Year's dawn broke, keeping warm by a fire which was previously set up the previous evening. We had a consciousness that we were still in New Year's Eve in spite of

already being actually in the New Year. Elder people who had a job in the cities, Osaka, Tokyo or others, and came back to our home town, took part in the talking and would talk about their experiences in the cities, astonishing us by new stories. We used to idolize the elder ones who were seventeen or eighteen, who wore a suit and spoke standard Japanese (Tokyo accent).

After that we returned back to our home, looking sleepy, and took a nap at home. And then we had the most pleasant day of the year, "**OSHOGATSU**", New Year's day.



CHILDHOOD GRAFFITI

(An English Translated Edition.)

MESSAGES FROM THE PERSONS CONCERNED

This book (Childhood Graffiti) suggests us of desirable surroundings for the children in the 21st century.

A little before Japan became industrialized and urbanized to the present level, most people were engaged in agriculture, fishery, and forestry. The life of the people is quite similar all over Japan. Men and women worked in paddy fields and farmlands not far away from home. Children helped their parents a lot, and still they spent the days playing in company till dusk outside. The life of children was full of various experiences. They tried to make tools or traps to catch fish or birds. They helped their parents to bake charcoals for daily use or to make fermented soy beans, and thus they imitated adults and mastered naturally various techniques of life. They also tried at home some intriguing science experiments taught at school or took all time and efforts to complete the handicraft assignment. Children sometimes compete with each other their bravery by trying a little dangerous play.

The whole family helped each other in carrying out seasonal events and customs, which were thus handed down from generation to generation. Both adults and children joined community activities such as festivals praying for good harvests and thanking for them.

At that time people seemed to have moderate modern life with some use of machines and tools to convenience life and farming, which could be called the 'sustainable richness'. We were able to enjoy such modest life in harmony with nature. This book illustrates many examples of way of life in those days mainly through the description of children's play. Not only in Japan but in all over the world, as urbanization has proceeded, environment where children grow up has gradually deteriorated. In considering such worsening conditions, this book, I am sure, will offer lots of suggestions for the children and adults in the coming century.

Rikuko OKUDA, IPA Japan

In my daily work as a shadow puppeteer in Japan I come into contact with many children. The lack of knowledge and interest in game and playing worries me. A very important side of their heritage is not being passed onto them. That of course is not the only reason. Places to play are fast disappearing, and playmates are usually shut up studying at "cram-schools." If we skip one generation, it will be lost forever, and I don't think any adult has the right to do this.

This is fast becoming an international problem. Maybe people reading the English version of this book will be prompted to think of this problem in relation to their own country, and if they start early enough, maybe they can do better than we have. Good Luck!

Heren Rowena MACGILL

This book reminds me of lots of things. I, as a child, had plenty of time, space, company, choice etc. We had adults who let us play around till dark. We had soil to make mud balls, insects, weeds etc. Nature was so close to us even in an urban area some 30 years ago. It reminds me of the fact that Japan was rich not in money but nature, time, and imagination. I should not beautify the past, but it is worth remembering how much we enjoyed playing, and it is even necessary to see how much we have lost both in environment and in ourselves (mind and heart).

Masuko YAMATAKA

I had been looking forward to have activities to do much for someone who needed assistances since my retiring from a company. When I heard that there was a group to introduce Japanese children's culture to foreign country's children, I took part in the group with pleasure. The playings or games shown in this book are almost the ones which I played in my childhood from 1930s to 1940s and I think that these were played in much older time. Some of them might be in more than one hundred years ago. I think that any adult has a duty to hand our cultural heritage to children. It is wonderful to introduce our Japanese heritage to foreign children. It is my great pleasure if more foreign children will understand Japan through this book.

Hisao TAKAHASHI

In the world, there are many children who do not have the opportunity of studying. There are many children who have to work for their families from dawn till dusk. No play, no fun, no music, no voice to claim their rights. Some children make carpets in the dusty room all day long.

Other children even have to sell themselves in the dark room. No dream, no hope, no future.

This is our world. This is our reality. What should we do for them? Where should we start for them?

I am always asking myself the same questions.

Ikuko UTSUNOMIYA



The International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA) is an international non-governmental organization. Membership is open to any individual group or organization which supports the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Child, especially Article 7, paragraph 3, which states:

"The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation which should be directed to the same purpose as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of right."

As an IPA member, I worry about the present critical situation of children's environment for creative play in nature which is an important heritage handed by children themselves from generation to generation. However, resent global urbanization and commercialized play game introduced by adult in modern society direct children toward the artificial life style decreasing the harmony with nature and the sense of wonder. In order to facilitate children's direct communication and mutual understanding through their creative and cultural activities we wish the people reading this book to understand and join our voluntary activity of IPA Japan to create a human inter-network to introduce each other children's creative games and playing all over the world.

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<http://www.spice.or.jp/~ipajapan/>



That's it ! This is only a little part of what I can remember of my childhood. I still have a lot of memories, which is the reason why, after this book, I wrote "FURUSATO KODOMO WISDOM". It hasn't yet been translated into English, and I'm already working on a third book.

By the way, about the translation of "FURUSATO KODOMO GRAFFITI", all my good friends, who read it, and who share the same ideas, told me how wonderful it would be to introduce it to all the children of the world....Here you are !

Unfortunately, my knowledge in foreign languages is absolutely nil, so they - my friends - did the translation from Japanese to English. By having it done that way, as I had to do the rest, I realized that, even though I wrote it first, I really had to know everything in it in order to make it understandable to you; that's why I had so much fun working on the drawings, the captions, and their respective layout.

All the stories in this book took place in the 50's and the 60's (I was born on Sep. 1st, 1950.), in a Japanese countryside of that time. Things had been that way for quite a while. Kids of that time were part of nature and life, had to find some purpose, and act on it on their own. Whether they succeeded or failed, it was their responsibility. That was what made it a lot of fun.

Now, 30 years later, I'm the owner of a small printing company, and everyday, I use that creativity, in a big or small way.

I'm enjoying it all the time ! There is no need to worry, as I got enough work to make a good living, I really think I'm the happiest person of the world ! In these times when rank and fortune seem to be so important, I think that one's happiness is the most treasurable thing one can have.

I do believe that children can achieve that, depending on how they were raised, and whether nature is part of their life. The reason is that nature never lies or cheats, also it can be at times very gentle, or on the contrary very cruel.

I believe that heart abounds when there is an accumulation of emotions. I also think that these emotions should come naturally, and that imagination is necessary. The readymade games kids play with don't allow them to develop their imagination or their intelligence. It's impossible to accomplish that but within the nature God gave us.

I can't wait when I think that this book is going to be read around the world. As a child, when I read "Robinson Crusoe", I was so excited I couldn't sleep, and I tried to do many things as they were written in that story.

The wonderful thing about those times was that we had to do it on our own, developing our hearts and bodies.

If, after reading this book, some children have the feeling they can do something creative, alone or with some friends, then I, as a human being, will be immensely pleased to know that, with such experience, these kids will grow up and pass it on to their own children.

I'm greatly thankful to my friends, and in particular to Yves FERRERO, who supported me, and did their best, understanding that my heart is still as it was 30 years ago.

Finally, my deepest thanks to my wife, MACHIKO, who heartfully supported me in this adventure.

1996.8.1

RYUICHI HARAGA